THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST

Diuided into foure Bookes.

Written in Latin by the Learned and Deuout man

THOMAS A KEMPIS,
Canon Regular of the Order of S. Augustine.

Translated into English by F. B.

The fourth Edition.



By IOHN COVSTVRIER.

M. DC. XXXIII.

G.

~~Hist. sac. 29.~~

K. Jesus Christ
[De Imit. - Eng.]

I.C. Eng. ~~18~~.
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BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE
HONOVRABLE
AND
VERTVOVS
ELIZABETH VAVX
Mother to the LORD
VAVX.

HONOVRABLE AND RICHT WORTHY, *The publike demonſtration which you haue lately giuen of your true deſire to follow the foot-ſteps of our Lord, vndergoing ſo heauy a Croſſe for his ſake, with ſo ready & reſolued a*

mind, hath moued me to dedicate this little Booke, of the Imitation of Christ, *vnto You: assuring my selfe that it wil be no lesse grateful to You, to see it appeare in light, purged from many mistaken sentences which were in the former Translations, then the reading and practice therof wil be profitable to others: it being so diuine and excellent a worke, as in the opinion of such as can best iudge of this matter, of al the Books which are written, that treate of spirit and Christian Perfection (the holie Scripture excepted) it is inferiour to none, if it excelleth not al.*

No book hath been more approued by general consent, none more often printed and translated into diuers lan-

guages, none more eſteemed, commended, yea cõmanded alſo by the chiefe Maiſters of Spirit of ſome Religious Orders, to be often read by euerie one in priuate, and once a week publikely to al. So ful of ſweet ſenſe is this diuine Flower, that the moſt ſpiritual bees may dayly draw from thence great plenty of celeſtial hony. It is a dish of ſo diuine meate, that it neuer ſatiates the deuout mind but as the wiſdome of God doth promiſe to al ſuch as ſit at that heauenlie banquet; ſo shal they find in this ſpiritual food, The more they eate it, the more they ſhal hunger after it.

And the reaſon heereof is, for that it contayneth ſo great depth of ſpirit, and ſo great flore and varietie of heauenlie

documents, that it seemeth euer new to the Reader, and like another Manna affoardeth to euerie one that delightful taſt which beſt agreeth with the palate of his ſoule: and none can loath it, but they whoſe luſtes doe carry them to Egyptian ſlauery. A true Iſraelite may feed vpon it fourty yeares togeather, and euer find ſuch pleaſing taſt, and increaſing ſtrength by vſe therof, as wil ſuſtaine him in the deſert of this world, & enable him to goe on without fainting, til he arriue at his promiſed inheritance of eternal reſt.

The practiſe of that which this Book doth teach, couereth the ſoule with the rich garment of grace, & adorneth it with the ſplendent pearles of Euangelical perfection, which ma-

keth vs more pleasing in the sight of God, then the deckings of al earthly iewels make the fayrest Lady in the Kingdome where you are, appeare beautiful to the eyes of men. It returneth aboundant gayne for sustained losses, and enlargeth the libertie which is now restrayned. It raiseth vp to cheereful confidence the debased head, and placeth in a Throne of endles honour those who in this world doe seem imprisoned in the black cloud of disgrace.

To Yow therfore who haue so willingly endured the losse of your earthly substance, I haue thought good to present this Euangelical Pearle, & incõparable Treasure contayned in a little roome. Heer you shal find the most per-

fect manner of conforming our ſelues to Chriſt our heauenly Paterne, & ſee the vertues ſet forth in their colours which did moſt shine in the life of our Lord himſelf, and read in plaine and vulgar phraſe thoſe leſſons of high perfection, which are commended vnto vs by the higheſt wiſdome, & which haue made as many Saints, as they haue had diligent and obſeruant followers.

Accept therfore, I beſeech you, this little Preſent, preſented by him who wisheth you much more temporal happines then your preſent ſtate affoardeth; & that endles glory, wherof your preſet ſuffring is no vncertaine pledge ge. This firſt of Ianuary. 1620.

20 MA 64 *Yours, euer aſſured,*

F. B.

OF THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST.

THE FIRST BOOK.

CHAP. I.

Of the Imitation of Christ, and contempt of al the vanities of the world.

HE that followeth me, walketh not in darkneſſe, ſaith our Lord. Theſe are he words of Chriſt, by which we are admoniſhed, that we

ought to imitate his life, and manners, if we wil be partakers of his diuine light, and be deliuered from al blindneſſe of hart. Let therfore our chiefeſt care be to meditate vpon the life of Ieſus Chriſt.

1. The doctrine of Chriſt exceedeth al the doctrine of the Saints, and he that had the light of ſpirit, would diſcouer therin a ſecret and hidden Manna. But it falleth out, that many, who often heare the Ghoſpel of Chriſt, doe yet feele in themſelues but ſlender motion of any holy deſire, becauſe they are void of the ſpirit of Chriſt. But whoſoeuer wil fully and feelingly vnderſtand the words of Chriſt, muſt endeauour to conforme his life wholy to the life of Chriſt.

3. What wil it auaile thee to diſpute profoundly of the Trinitie, if thou be voyd of humility, and therby diſpleaſing to the Trinitie? High words, ſurely, make a man neither

holy nor iuſt, but a vertuous life maketh him deare to God. I had rather feele compunction, then vnderſtand the definition therof. If thou dideſt know the whole Bible by hart, and the ſayings of al the Philoſophers, what would al that profit thee, without charitie and the grace of God? Vanitie of vanities, and al is vanitie, but only to loue God, and wholy to ſerue him. This is the higheſt wiſdome, by contempt of the world, to tend towards the Kingdome of heauen

4. It is therfore vanitie to ſeek after fading riches, and to repoſe truſt in them. It is alſo vanitie to gape after honours, and to climb to high degree. It is vanitie to follow the appetites of the flesh, and to labour for that, for which thou muſt afterwards ſuffer more grieuous punishments. Vanitie it is to wish to liue long, and to be careleſſe to liue wel. It is vanitie to

mind only this preſent life, and not to foreſee thoſe things which are to come. It is vanitie to ſet thy loue on that which ſpeedily paſſeth away, and not to haſten thither, where euerlaſting ioy is permanent.

5. Cal often to mind this prouerb: That the eye is neuer ſatisfied with ſeeing, nor the eare filled with hearing. Endeauour therfore to withdraw thy hart from the affection of viſible things, and to turne thy ſelfe to the inuiſible. For they that follow their ſenſuality, doe ſtaine their owne conſciences, and looſe the grace of God.

CHAP. II.

Of the humble conceit of our ſelues.

ALL Men by nature deſire to know: but what auaileth knowledge without the feare of God? Surely,

an humble husband-man that feareth God, is better then a proud Philosopher that neglecting himselfe, laboureth to vnderstand the course of the heauens. Who so knoweth himselfe wel, groweth daily more contemptible in his owne conceit, and delighteth not in the praises of men. If I vnderstood al that is to be knowne in the world, and were not in charity, what would that help me in the sight of God, who wil iudge me according to my deeds?

2. Giue not thy selfe to inordinate desire of knowledge, for therin is much distraction and deceit. The learned are willing to seeme so to others, and to be accunted wise. There be many things, which to know doth little or nothing profit the soule: and he is verie vnwise, that bestoweth his labour about other things, then those that may auaile him for the health of his soule. Many words do not satisfy the desires of

the hart: but a good life comforteth the mind, and a pure conſcience giueth great aſſurance in the ſight of God.

3. How much the more thou knoweſt, and how much the better thou vnderſtandeſt, ſo much the more grieuouſly shalt thou therfore be iudged, vnles thy life be alſo more holy. Be not therfore extolled in thy owne mind for anie art or ſcience which thou knoweſt: but rather let the knowledge giuen thee, make thee more faithful. If thou thinkeſt that thou vnderſtandeſt & knoweſt much; know alſo that there be many things more, which thou knoweſt not. Think not too wel of thy ſelf but rather confeſſe thine ignorance. Why wilt thou prefer thy ſelfe before others, ſith there be many more learned & skilful in the Law then thou? If thou wilt know or learne any thing profitable, deſire not to be knowne, and to be little eſteemed of by man.

4. The higheſt and moſt profitable reading is the true knowledge and conſideration of ourſelues. It is great wiſdome and perfection to eſteeme nothing of ourſelues, and to thinke alwaies wel, and commendably of others. If thou shouldſt ſee another openly ſinne, or commit any heynous offence; yet oughteſt thou not to eſteeme the better of thy ſelfe, for thou knoweſt not how long thou shalt be able to remayne in good eſtate. We are al frayle, but thou oughteſt to eſteeme none more frayle then thy ſelfe.

CHAP. III.

Of the doctrine of Truth.

HAPPY is he whome Truth by itſelfe doth teach, not by figures, and voyces that paſſe away; but as it is in itſelfe. Our owne opinion and ſenſe doe often deceaue vs, and it di-

ſcernes little. What auaileth it to diſpute and cõtend about darke & hidden things; wheras for being ignorant of thẽ we shal not ſo much as once be reprehended at the day of iugement? It is a great folly to neglect the things that are profitable & neceſſary, and giue our minds to that which is curious & hurtful: we haue eyes and doe not ſee.

2. And what haue we to doe with the terms and diſtinctions of Logitians? He to whome the Eternal Word ſpeaketh, is deliuered from multitudes and diuerſities of opinions. By that one VVord al things doe ſpeake, and al declare the ſame: and this is the beginning, and that which ſpeaketh vnto vs. No man without that Word vnderſtandeth or iudgeth rightly. He to whome al things are one, who draweth al things to one, and ſeeth al things in one, may enioy a quiet mind, and remaine peaceable in God. O God, the eternal Truth, make me one with

with thee in euerlasting charity. It is tedious to me often to read & heare many things. In thee is al that I would haue, and can desire. Let al Doctours hold their peace; let al creatures be silent in thy sight: speak thou alone vnto me.

3. How much the more one is retired within himselfe, and becommeth inwardly sincere, and pure, so much the more, and higher mysteries doth he vnderstand without labour: for that he receaueth light of vnderstanding from aboue. A pure, sincere, and stayed spirit is not distracted, though he be emploied in many workes: for that he worketh al to the honour of God, and laboureth for inward tranquillity, without seeking himself in any thing he doth. Who hinders and troubles thee more then the vnmortified desires of thine owne hart? A good and deuout man first of al dispoſeth in himselfe

his outward works: neither doe they draw him to the desires of an inordinate inclination; but he ordereth them to the prescript of reason. Who hath a greater combate, then he that laboureth to ouercome himself? This ought to be our endeauour, to conquer our selues daily, to wax stronger, and be more able to subdue our passions, and alwaies in this way to get some ground.

4. Al perfection in this life hath some imperfections mixt with it: & no knowledge of ours is void of darkenesse, and ignorãce. An humble knowledge of thy self is a more secure way to God, then a deep search after learning: yet learning is not to be blamed, nor the only knowledge of any thing whatsoeuer is to be disliked, it being good in itself, and ordained by God; but a good conscience, and a vertuous life is to be preferred before it. And for that many endeauour rather to get knowledge, then to liue wel; therfore they are

often deceiued, and reape either none, or very ſlender profit of their labours.

5. O, if men beſtowed as much labour in the rooting out of vices, and planting of vertues, as they doe in moouing doubts & queſtions! neither would there ſo much hurt be done, nor ſo great ſcandal be giuen in the world, nor ſo much looſnes be practiſed in places erected for vertue. Truly at the day of Iudgment we shal not be examined what we haue read, but what we haue done: nor how wel we haue ſpoken, but how vertuouſly we haue liued. Tel me now, where are al thoſe great Doctours and Maiſters with whō thou waſt wel acquainted, whilſt they liued and flourished in learning? Now others poſſeſſe their liuings, & perhaps doe ſcarce euer thinke of them. In their life time they ſeemed ſomthing, and now they are not ſpoken of.

6. O, how quickly doth the glory of this world paſſe away! Would God

their life had been answerable to their learning, then had their study and reading been to good purpose How many perish in this world by reason of vaine learning, who take little care of the seruice of God? And because they rather choose to be great then humble, therfore they vanish away in their own thoughts. He is truly great, that is great in charity. He is truly great, that is little in himself, and that maketh no account of the height of honour. He is truly wise, that accounteth al earthly things as dung, that he may gaine Christ. And he is truly learned, that fulfilleth the wil of Christ, and forsaketh his owne.

CHAP. IIII.

Of prudence, and foresight in our actions.

WE must not giue eare to euery suggestiō or instinct, but ought warily, & leasurely to ponder things according to the wil of God. But (alas!) such is our weakneſſe that we rather often beliene, and speake euil of others then good. Thoſe that are perfectly vertuous, doe not easily giue credit to euery thing that is told them; for they know that humane frailty is prone to euil, & very subiect to faile in words.

2. It is great wisdome not to be rash in thy proceedings, nor to stand stifly in thine owne conceits; as also not to beliene euery thing which thou heareſt: nor presently to relate againe to others, what thou haſt heard, or doſt beliene. Consult with him that

is wise, and of a good conscience, and seeke to be instructed by a better then thy self, rather then to follow thine owne inuentions. A good life maketh a man wise according to God, and giueth him experience in many things. How much the humbler one is in himselfe, and more subiect and resigned vnto God; so much the more prudent shal he be in al his affaires, and enioy greater peace and quiet of hart.

CHAP. V.

Of the reading of holy Scriptures.

TRVTH, not eloquence is to be sought for in holy Scripture. Each part of it is to be read with the same spirit it was made. We should rather search after spiritual profit in Scriptures, then subtility of speach. We ought to read deuout and simple bookes as

willingly as high and learned Let not the reputation of the Writer offend thee, whether he be of great or ſmal learning: but let the pure word of truth moue thee to read. Search not who ſpake this, or that, but marke what is ſpoken.

2. Men paſſe away; but the truth of our Lord remaineth for euer. God ſpeaketh vnto vs ſundry wayes, without repect of perſons. Our owne curioſity often hindreth vs in reading of the Scriptures, when as we wil examine, and diſcuſſe that which we should rather paſſe ouer without more adoe. If thou deſire to reape profit, read humbly, plainly, and faithfully: neuer deſire the eſtimation of learning. Inquire willingly, and heare with ſilence the words of holy men: diſlike not the Parables of Elders, for they are not recounted without cauſe.

CHAP. VI.

Of inordinate desires, and affections.

WHensoeuer a man desireth any thing inordinately, he is presently disquieted in himselfe The proud and couetous can neuer rest The poore & humble in spirit, liue togeather in al peace. The man that is not wholy dead in himselfe is quickly tempted, and ouercome in smal and trifling things. The weake in spirit, and that is yet in a manner subiect to his appetites, and prone to sensible things, can hardly withdraw himselfe altogeather from earthly desires. And therfore he is often afflicted, when he goeth about to retire himselfe from them: and easily falleth into indignation, when any opposition is made against him.

2. And if he hath followed therin his appetite, he is presently disquieted with remorse of conscience: for that he yealded to his passion, which profiteth him nothing to the obtaining of the peace he sought for. True quiet of mind therefore, is gotten by resisting our passiõs, not by obeying them. There is no peace in the hart of a carnal man, nor of him that is addicted to outward things, but in the spiritual and feruent.

CHAP. VII.

Of flying vayne hope, and pride.

HE is vaine that putteth his trust in men, or creatures. Be not ashamed to serue others for the loue of Iesus Christ; nor to be esteemed poore in this world. Presume not vpon thy selfe but place thy hope in God. Doe

what lieth in thy power, and God wil assist thee. Trust not in thine owne knowledge, nor in the wisdome or prudence of any liuing creature: but rather in the grace of God, who helpeth the humble, and humbleth the presumptuous, and proud.

2. Glory not in wealth, if thou haue it; nor in the power of thy friends; but in God, who giueth al things, and aboue al desireth to giue thee himself. Extol not thy self for the stature, and beauty of thy body, which is dissolued, and disfigured with euery little sicknes. Take not pleasure in thy natural guifts, or wit, lest thereby thou displease God, to whome appertaineth al the good whatsoeuer nature hath giuen thee.

3. Esteeme not thy self better then others, lest perhaps in the sight of God, who knoweth what is in man, thou be accompted worse then they. Be not proud of thy good workes, for

he iudgements of God are farre diffe-
ent from the iudgements of men, and
hat often offendeth him which plea-
ſeth them. If there be any good in thee,
belieue that there is much more in
others, that ſo thou maiſt the better
keepe within thy hart the precious
treaſure of humility. It is no preiudice
vnto thee to eſteeme thy ſelf worſe
then al the world: but it hurteth thee
very much, to preferre thy ſelf before
any one. The humble enioy continual
peace: but in the hart of the proud, is
enuy, and often indignation.

CHAP. VIII.

That too much familiarity is to be shunned.

LAy not thy hart open to euery one;
but treate of thy affaires with the
wiſe, and ſuch as feare God. Conuerſe

not much with yong people, and ſtrangers. Flatter not the rich; neither doe thou appeare willingly before great Perſonages. Keep company with the humble, ſimple, deuout, and vertuous; and conferre with them of thoſe things, that may edify. Be not familiar with any woman; but in general commend al good women to God. Deſire to be familiar with God alone, and his Angels, and fly the knowledge of men.

2. We muſt haue charity towards al, but familiarity with al is not expedient. Sometimes it falleth out, that the fame of ſome perſon that is vnknowne, is much eſteemed; whoſe preſence notwithſtanding is not grateful to the eies of the beholders. We thinke ſometimes to pleaſe others by our company, and we rather diſtaſt them with our diſordered manners, and the euil cuſtomes which they diſcouer in vs.

CHAP. IX.

Of Obedience, and ſubiection.

IT is a great matter to liue in Obedience, to be vnder a Superiour, and not to be at our owne diſpoſition. It is much ſafer to liue in the ſtate of ſubiection, then of gouernment. Many liue vnder obedience, rather for neceſſity then for charity: and ſuch are diſcontented, and doe eaſily repine and murmure. Neither can they attaine to freedome of mind, vnles they willingly and hartily put themſelues vnder obedience for the loue of God. Goe whither thou wilt, thou ſhalt find no reſt, but in humble ſubiection vnder the gouernment of a Superiour. The imagination and change of places haue deceiued many.

2. True it is, that euery one willingly

doth that which agreeth with his owne ſenſe and liking; and is apt to affect thoſe moſt, that are of his owne mind: But if God be amongſt vs, we muſt leaue our owne iudgemẽt, that ſo peace and quietnes may be the better preſerued. Who is ſo wiſe, that he can fully know al things? Truſt not therfore too much to thine owne conceits; but be willing to heare the iudgement of others. If that which thou thinkeſt be good, and notwithſtanding doſt leaue it for God, and followeſt the opinion of another, it shal be better for thee.

3. I haue often heard, that it is more ſecure to heare and take counſel, then to giue it. It may alſo fal out, that each ones opinion may be good: but to refuſe to yeald to others, when as reaſon, or cauſe requireth it, is a token of wilfullnes and pride.

CHAP. X.

Of the auoyding ſuperfluity in words.

FLy the vnquietnes of men as much as thou canſt : for the talke of worldly affaires hindreth very much, although they be recounted with ſincere intention: for we are quickly defiled, and as it were enthralled with vanity. I could wish that I had oftentimes held my peace , when I haue ſpoken; & that I had not been in company. Why doe we ſo willingly ſpeake, and talke one with another, when notwithſtanding we ſeldom returne to ſilence, without hurt of conſcience? The cauſe wherfore we ſo willingly talke, is, for that by diſcourſing one with another, we ſeeke to receaue comfort one of another; and deſire to eaſe our mind ouer-wearied with ſundry thoughts:

and

and we talke willingly, and thinke of those things which we loue best, and most desire; of those, which we feele most contrary vnto vs.

2. But alas, oftentimes in vaine, and to no end: for this outward comfort is cause of no smal losse of inward, and diuine consolation. Therfore we must watch and pray, lest our time passe without any fruit or profit. If it be lawful, and expedient for thee to speak, speak those things that may edify. An euil custome, and neglect of our owne good, doth very much slack the raynes to inconsiderate speach: Yet deuout discourses of heauenly things, doe greatly further our progresse in spirit, especially where persons of one mind and spirit be gathered togeather in God.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Of the obteyning of peace, and zeale of spiritual profit.

WE might enioy peace, if we would not busie ourselues with the words and deeds of other men, which appertaine nothing to our charge. How can he liue long in peace, that thrusteth himselfe into the cares of others, or that little or seldom recollecteth himselfe within his own breft? Blessed are the simple and pure minds; for they shal enioy much peace.

2. What is the reason, why some of the Saints were so perfect and contemplatiue? Because they labouted to mortify themselues whely to earthly desires: and therefore they could with their whole hart giue themselues to God, and freely attend to their owne

affaires. We are too much lead by our owne passions, and too solicitous for transitory things. We also seldome ouercome any one vice perfectly, and are not inflamed with a feruent desire to profit in spirit: and therfore we remaine cold in deuotion, and ful of tepidity.

3. If we were pefectly dead vnto ourselues, and not intangled within our owne breasts; then we might also haue some tast of diuine things, and feele the sweetnesse of heauenly contemplatiõ. The greatest, and indeed the whole impediment is, for that we are not free from our passions, and disordered inclinations; neither doe we endeauour to enter into that path of perfection, which the Saints haue walked before vs: and when any smal aduersity befalleth vs, we are too quickly deiected, & turne ourselues to humane comforts.

4. If we endeauour like men of courage to stãd continually in the battaile;

surely we should feele the fauourable assistance of God from heauen. For he who giueth vs occasion to fight, to the end we may get the victory, is ready to succour those that fight manfully, and doe trust in his grace. If we esteeme our progresse in Religious life, to consist only in these exteriour obseruatiõs, our deuotion wil quickly be at an end. Let vs set the axe to the root, that being freed from passions, we may enioy true peace of mind.

5. If euery yeare we would root out one vice, we should quickly become perfect men. But now oftentimes we perceaue it goeth contrary, and that we were better, and of a more pure conscience at the beginning of our conuersion, then after many yeares of our profession. Our feruour; and profit should increase daily; but now it is accounted a great matter, if one can retaine but some part of his first spirit. If we would vse but a little violence in

the beginning, then should we be able to performe al things afterwards with eaſe, and ioy of hart.

6. It is a hard matter to leaue that to which we are accuſtomed: but harder to doe againſt our owne wils. But if thou doſt not ouercome little and eaſy things, how wilt thou ouercome harder matters? Reſiſt thy inclination in the firſt motions, and breake off euil cuſtomes, leſt perhaps by little and little they draw thee to greater difficulty. O, if thou dideſt conſider how much inward peace vnto thy ſelfe, and ioy to others thou shouldeſt procure by demeaning thy ſelfe wel; I ſuppoſe thou wouldeſt be more careful of thy ſpiritual profit.

CHAP. XII.

Of the profit of aduersity.

IT is good that we haue sometimes griefe & aduersities: for they often make a man enter into himself, and remember that he is heer in banishment, and ought not to place his trust in any worldly thing It is good that we be sōtimes contradicted; and that there be an euil or hard conceit had of vs: and this, although we doe, and intend wel. These things help often to the attayning of humility, and defend vs from vaine glory: for then we chiefly seeke God for our inward witnesse, when outwardly we be contemned by men, and when there is no credit giuen vnto vs.

2. And therfore a man should settle himself so fully in God, that he needed

not to ſeeke many comforts of men. When a good and vertuous man is afflicted, tempted, or troubled with euil thoughts; then he vnderſtandeth better the great need he hath of God's aſſiſtance, without whoſe help he perceaueth he can doe nothing that is good. Then alſo he ſorroweth, lamenteth, and prayeth for the miſeries he ſuffereth. Then is he weary of liuing longer, and wisheth that death would come, that he might be diſſolued, and be with Chriſt. Then alſo he wel perceaueth, that complete ſecurity, and perfect peace cānot be had in this world

CHAP. XIII.

Of reſiſting temptations.

SO long as we liue in this world we cannot be without tribulation and temptation; for as it is written in Iob:

Temptation is the life of man vpon earth. Euery one therfore ought to be careful, and diligently to arme himself with prayer against his temptations, lest the Diuel find time & place to deceaue him; who neuer sleepeth, but goeth about seeking whome he may deuoure. No man is so perfect and holy, but hath somtimes temptations: and we cannot be altogeather free from them.

2. Temptations are often profitable vnto men; though they be troublesome, and grieuous: for in them man is humbled, purged, and instructed. Al the Saints haue passed and profited through many tribulations & temptations; and they that could not beare temptations became reprobate and fel from God. There is no Order so holy, nor place so secret, where there be not temptations or aduersities.

3. There is no man that is altog eather free from temptations, whilest he liueth on earth: for in ourselues is

the cauſe therof, being born with inclination to euil. When one temptation or tribulation goeth away, another commeth: and we shal euer haue ſomething to ſuffer, becauſe we haue loſt that innocency with which we were created. Many ſeek to fly temptations, and doe fal more grieuouſly into them. By flight alone we cannot ouercome; but by patience and true humility, we become ſtronger then al our enemies.

4. He that only auoideth them outwardly, and doth not pluck them vp by the root, shal profit little: yea temptation wil the ſooner returne vnto him; and he shal feele himſelfe in worſe caſe then before. By little, and little, and by patience with longanimity (through God's help) thou shalt more eaſily ouercome, then with violence, and thine owne importunity. Often take counſel in temptations: and deale not roughly with him that is tempted; but giue him comfort, as thou

wouldeſt wish to be done to thy ſelfe.

5. The beginning of al euil temptations, is inconſtancy of mind, and little confidence in God. For as a ship without a ſterne is toſſed to and fro with the waues: ſo the man that is negligent, and leaueth his purpoſe, is many waies tempted Fire trieth iron, and temptation a iuſt man. We know not oftentimes what we are able to doe, but temptations doe shew vs what we are. We muſt be watchful, eſpecially in the beginning of the temptation; for the enemy is then more eaſily ouercome, if he be not ſuffered to enter the dore of our harts, but be reſiſted without the gate at his firſt knock. Wherfore one ſaid: Withſtand the beginnings, for an after-remedy comes ofté too late. Firſt there commeth to the mind an euil thought, then a ſtrong imagination therof, afterwards delight, and an euil mo-

tion, and then consent: and so by little and little our wicked enemy getteh ful entrance, whilst he is not resisted in the beginning. And how much the longer one is negligent in resisting, so much weaker doth he become daily, and the enemy stronger against him.

6. Some suffer greatest temptations in the beginning of their conuersion; others in the later end; others againe are much troubled almost through the whole time of their life. Some are but easily tempted according to the wisdome, and equity of the diuine appointment, which weigheth the state and deserts of men; and ordaineth al things for the sauing of his elect, and chosen seruants.

7. We ought not therefore to despaire when we are tẽpted; but so much the more feruently to pray vnto God, that he wil vouchsafe to help vs in al tribulation; who surely according to the saying of S. Paul, wil make with

temptation such issue, that we may be able to sustaine it. Let vs therfore humble ourselues vnder the hand of God in al temptations and tribulations; for he wil saue, and exalt the humble in spirit.

8. In temptations and afflictions man is proued, how much he hath profited; and his merit is therby the greater before God, and his vertues doe more openly appeare. Neither is it any great matter if a man be deuout and feruent, when he feeleth no heauines: but if in time of aduersity he beare himself patiently, there is hope of great good. Some are kept from great teptations, and are often ouercome in smal ones, which doe daily occurre; to the end that being humbled, they may neuer presume on themselues in great matters, who in so smal things doe see themselues so weake.

CHAP. XIV.

Of auoyding rash iudgement.

TVrne thine eyes vnto thy selfe, and beware thou iudge not rashly the deeds of other men. In iudging of others a man alwaies laboureth in vaine, often erreth, and quickly sinneth; but in iudging and discussing of himselfe, he alwaies laboureth fruitfully. We often iudge of things according to our owne desire; for priuate affection bereaues vs easily of true iudgemēt. If God were alwaies the pure intention of our desire, we should not be so much troubled with the repugnance of our sensuality.

2 But oftentimes some inward secret inclination, or outward affection occurreth, which draweth vs after it. Many secretly seeke themselues in

their actions, and know it not. They seeme also to liue in good peace of mind, when things are done according to their wil, and opinion; but if it succeed otherwise then they desire, they are straight-wayes troubled, and much afflicted. The diuersities of iudgements and opinions, cause oftentimes dissentions between religious and deuout persons.

3. An old custome is hardly broken, and no man is willingly lead further then himselfe liketh. If thou dost more rely vpon thine owne reason or industry, then vpon the vertue of obedience to Iesus Christ; it wil be long before thou be illuminated with grace: for Almighty God wil haue vs perfectly subiect vnto him, & that we transcend the narrow limits of humane reason, enflamed with his loue.

CHAP. XV.

Of workes done of charity.

FOR no worldly thing, nor for the loue of any man, is any euil to be done: but yet for the profit of one that ſtandeth in need, a good worke is ſometimes to be left off, or changed alſo for a better. For by doing this, a good worke is not loſt, but changed into another of greater merit. The exteriour worke without charity profiteth nothing; but whatſoeuer is done of charity be it neuer ſo little and contemptible in the ſight of the world, it is fruitful, and of great eſteeme in the ſight of God. For God weigheth more with how much loue one worketh, then how much he doth. He doth much, that loueth much.

2. He doth much that doth a thing

wel: he doth wel that rather ſerueth the common good of others, then his owne wil. Oftentimes it ſeemeth to be charity, and it is rather carnality: becauſe natural inclination, ſelfe-wil, hope of reward, and deſire of our owne commodity wil ſeldome be wanting.

3. He that hath true and perfect charity, ſeeketh himſelfe in nothing; but only deſireth in al things that the glory of God ſhould be exalted. He alſo enuieth none; becauſe he loueth no priuate good: neither wil he reioyce in himſelfe; but wisheth aboue al things to enioy God. He attributeth nothing that is good to any man, but wholy referreth it vnto God, from whom, as frō the fountaine, al things proceed: in whom finally al Saints haue perfect reſt by fruition of his glory. O, he that had one ſparke of perfect charitie, how eaſily would he diſcerne, that al earthly things be ful of vanity!

CHAP. XVI.

Of bearing with the defects of others.

THose things that a man cannot amend in himselfe or in others, he ought to suffer patiently, vntil God ordaine otherwise. Thinke that perhaps it is better so, for thy trial and patience, without which our merits are not much to be esteemed. Thou oughtest to pray notwithstanding when thou hast such impedimēts, that God would vouchsafe to help thee, and that thou maist beare them patiently.

2. If one that is once or twice warned doth not amend, contend not with him; but commit al to God, that his wil may be fulfilled, and his name honoured in al his seruants, who knoweth how to turne euil into good.

End ca-

Endeauour to be patient in bearing with the defects & infirmities of others: for that thy selfe also hast many things, which must be suffered by others. If thou canst not make thy selfe such an one as thou wouldest; how canst thou expect to haue another in al things to thy liking? VVe would willingly haue others perfect, and yet we amend not our owne faults.

3. VVe wil haue others seuerely corrected, and wil not be corrected our selues. The large libertie of others displeaseth vs: and yet we wil not haue our desires denied vs. VVe wil haue others kept vnder by rigorous laws; but in no sort wil we our selues be restrayned. And thus it appeareth, how seldome we weigh our neighbour in the same ballance with our selues. If al men were perfect, what should we haue to suffer of our neigbour for God?

4. But now God hath thus ordained, that we may learne to beare one

anothers burden: for no man is without defect, no man without burden, no man sufficient of himselfe, no man endued with so much wisdom as he needeth; but we ought to beare with one another, comfort one another, help, instruct, & admonish one another. Aduersity best discouereth how great vertue each one hath: for occasions make not a man fraile, but doe shew what he is.

CHAP. XVII.

Of Religious life.

THOV must learne to break thy owne wil in many things, if thou wilt haue peace and concord with others. It is no smal matter to dwel in community, or in a congregation, and to conuerse therin without complaint, and to perseuer therin faithfully vntil death. Blessed is he that hath there liued wel, and ended happily. If

thou wilt perseuer in grace as thou oughtest, and profit in vertue, esteeme thy selfe as a banished man, and a pilgrim vpon earth. Thou must be cõtented for the loue of Christ to be esteemed as a foole in this world, if thou desire to lead a vertuous, & perfect religious life.

2. The wearing of a religious habit, & shauing of the Crowne doe little profit; but change of manners, and perfect mortification of passiõs make a true religious man. He that seeketh any thing els but God, and the health of his soule, shal find nothing but tribulation & sorrow. Neither can he remaine long in peace, that laboureth not to be in the meanest place, and subiect to al.

3. Thou camest to serue, not to be serued. Know that thou wast called to suffer & to labour, not to be idle, or to spend thy time in talke. Heer in the schoole of Christ, men are proued as gold in the fornace. Heer no man can stand, vnles he humble him-

selfe with his whole hart, for the loue of God.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of the examples of the holy Fathers.

CONSIDER the liuely examples of the holy Fathers, in whom true perfection and religion shined; and thou shalt see how little it is, and almost nothing, which we doe now in these daies. Alas, what is our life if it be compared to them! The Saints and freinds of Christ serued our Lord in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakednesse, in labour and wearines, in watching and fasting, in prayer and holy meditations, in persecutions and many reproaches.

1. O, how many and grieuous tribulations suffered the Apostles, Martyrs,

Confessours, Virgins, and al the rest that endeauoured to follow the steps of Christ! They hated their liues in this world, that they might possesse their soules in euerlasting life. O How strait and poore a life led the holy Fathers in the wildernes! How long and grieuous tentations suffered they! How often and how grieuously were they assaulted by their Ghostly enemy! How feruent praiers offered they daily to God! How rigorous abstinence did they vse! How feruent zeale, and care had they of their spiritual profit! How strong, and cõtinual a combat had they for the ouercomming of vices! How pure and vpright intention kept they vnto God! In the day they laboured, & in the night they attended to continual prayer, although when they laboured also they ceased not from mental prayer.

3. They spent al their tyme with profit: euery houre seemed short for

the ſeruice of God : and for the great ſweetnes they had in contemplation, they forgot the neceſſity of corporal refection. They renounced al riches, dignities, honours, freinds and kinsfolkes; they deſired to haue nothing which appertained to the world; they ſcarce tooke things neceſſarie for the ſuſtenance of life ; they grieued to ſerue their bodies euen in neceſſity. They were poore in earthly things, but rich in grace and vertues. Outwardly they wanted, but inwardly they were replenished with grace, and ſpiritual comfort.

4. They were ſtrangers in the world, but neer and familiar freinds to God. They ſeemed to themſelues as nothing, and abiect to this world: but they were precious, and beloued in the eyes of God. They were grounded in true humilitie, liued in ſimple obedience, walked in charity and patience: and therfore they profi-

ted daily in ſpirit, and obtayned great grace in God's ſight. They were giuen for an example and patterne of perfection in God's Church, and their example ſhould more ſtir vs vp to a deſire of our ſpiritual profit, then the number of the luke-warme and diſſolute liuers draw vs to the neglect therof.

5. O, how great was the feruour of all Religious perſons in the beginning of their holy Inſtitution? How great was their deuotion to prayer? How diligent emulation of vertue? How exact diſcipline flourished? How great reuerence and obedience, vnder the rule of their Superiour, obſerued they in all things? Their foot-ſteps yet remaining doe teſtify that they were indeed holy and perfect men; who fighting ſo valiantly, trode the world vnder their feet. Now he is greatly accounted of, that breaketh not the rule, and that can with patience endure that which he hath profeſſed.

6. O coldnes and negligence of our time, that we so quickly decline from our first feruour, and are come to that passe, that very slouth and coldnes of spirit makes our owne life tedious vnto vs. Would to God the desire to profit in vertue did not wholy sleep in thee, who hast often seen the holy examples of deuout and religious soules.

CHAP. XIX.

Of the exercise of a good, and Religious person

THE life of a Religious person ought to shine with al vertues: that he may inwardly be such as outwardly he seemeth to men. And with reason thou oughtest to be much more within, then is perceaued without: for God beholdeth the hart, whome we ought most highly to reuerence wher-

ſoeuer we are, and walke in purity like Angels in his ſight; and to renew daily our purpoſes, and ſtir vp ourſelues to feruour, as though this were the firſt day of our conuerſion; and to ſay: Help me my God, in this my good purpoſe, and in thy holie ſeruice; and grant, that I may now this day begin perfectly: for that which I haue done hitherto, is nothing.

2. According to our purpoſe, shal be the ſucceſſe of our profit: and much diligence is neceſſary to him that wil profit much. And if he that firmely purpoſeth, often faileth, what shal he doe, that ſeldome purpoſeth any thing, or with little certainty? It may fal out ſundry waies that we leaue off our purpoſe: and if for light occaſions we omit our accuſtomed exerciſes, it ſeldome paſſeth without ſome loſſe. The purpoſe of iuſt men is rather grouńded vpon the grace of God, then on their owne wiſdome, in whom alſo they al-

waies haue confidence, in whatsoeuer they take in hand; For man doth purpose, but God disposeth: neither is the way of man in his owne hands.

3. If an accustomed exercise be sometimes omitted for some worke of charitie, or of intention to profit our neighbour, it may easily afterward be recouered: but if it be lightly left through inconstancy or negligence, it is an offence, and wil proue hurtful. Though we endeauour what we can, yet shal we faile in many things. But yet we must alwaies purpose something certaine, especially against that which most hinders vs. We must examine wel, and order both our exteriour and interiour actions; for that both are expedient for our progresse in vertue.

4. If thou canst not alwaies recollect thy selfe, yet doe it somtimes, and that at least once euery day; to wit in the morning, or euening. In the morning

make thy good purposes; in the euening examine thy selfe what thou hast dõe that day in word, deed, or thought; for that in these oftentimes perhaps thou hast offended God, and thy neighbour. Arme thy selfe with courage against the malicious attemps of thine enemy. Refraine Gluttony and thou shalt more easily bridle al the disordered inclinations of the flesh. Neuer be altogeather idle, but either reading, or writing, or praying, or meditating, or labouring somthing of profit for the common good: but bodily exercises are to be discreetly vsed, and not to be vndertaken equally of al.

5. Those things that be not common, are not to be done in the sight of al: for priuate things are best done in secret. But thou must beware, thou neglect not that to which thou art bound by common rule, and be ready in performing thy priuate deuotions: but hauing fully and

faithfully accomplished al thy duties, and those things that were enioyned thee; if thou hast further leasure, returne to thy selfe as thy deuotion desireth. Al cannot vse the same exercise; but one is more conuenient for this person, another for that. According to the diuersity of times also, diuers exercises are fitting. For some suit better with festiual daies, others with daies of labour. We haue need of one kind in temptations, and of others in time of peace and quiet. We desire to thinke of other things, when we are sorrowful, then we doe when we are cheerful in our Lord.

6. When principal feasts draw neer, good exercises are to be renewed; and the intercession of Saints more feruently to be implored. From feast to feast, we should make some good purpose, as though we were then to depart out of this world, and to come to the euerlasting feast of heauen. And therfore we

ought to prepare ourſelues carefully at holy times, & to liue more deuoutly, and to keep more exactly al things that we are to obſerue, as though shortly we were to receaue reward of our labour at God's hand.

7. And if it be differred, let vs think that we were not wel prepared, nor worthy as yet of ſo great glory, as shal be reuealed in vs at the time appointed: and let vs labour to prepare ourſelues better for our departure. Bleſſed is that ſeruant (ſayth S. Luke the Euangeliſt) whom when his Lord commeth, he shal find watching: verily I ſay vnto you, he shal place him ouer al that he poſſeſſeth.

CHAP. XX.

Of the loue of ſolitude, and ſilence.

SEEKE a fit time to attend to thy ſelfe, & often thinke of the benefits of God. Leaue curious things. Read ouer ſuch matter, as may cauſe rather compunction, then the labour of much ſtudy. If thou withdraw thy ſelfe from ſuperfluous talke, and idle wandring about, as alſo from hearing of newes & tales; thou ſhalt find ſufficient, and fit time to thinke of good things. The greater Saints auoyded the company of men as much as they could, and choſe to liue to God in ſecret.

2. One ſaid: As often as I haue been amongſt men, I haue returned leſſe man. The ſame we find by experience when we talke long. It is eaſier to keep ſilence altogeather, then not to exceed

in words. It is easier for a man to keep home, then to demeane himselfe as he ought in al things abroad. He therfore that desireth to attaine to internal, and spiritual graces, ought with Iesus to withdraw himselfe from the people. No man goeth safely abroad, but he that gladly keepeth home. No man securely gouerneth, but he that delighteth to liue in subiection. No man securely commandeth, but he that hath learned readily to obey.

3. No man securely reioyceth, vnlesse he hath within him the testimony of a good conscience: And yet the security of Saints was alwaies ful of the feare of God. Neither were they lesse careful and humble in themselues, for that they shined outwardly with grace, and great vertues. But the security of euil men riseth of pride and deceaueth them. Neuer promise to thy selfe securitie in this life, although thou seeme to be a good Religious man,

or deuout Hermite.

4. Oftentimes thoſe, who in the iudgement of men were of better eſteeme, haue been in greateſt danger by reaſon of their too much confidence. Wherfore it is more profitable to manie, not to be altogeather free from temptations, but to be often aſſaulted, leſt they should be too ſecure, and ſo perhaps be lifted vp in pride: leſt alſo they should too freely giue themſelues to outward comfort. O, how good a conſcience should he keep, that would neuer ſeeke tranſitorie ioy: would neuer buſy himſelfe with the things of this world! And how great peace and quietnes should he poſſeſſe, that would cut off al vaine ſolicitude, and only thinke of diuine things, and ſuch as are profitable for his ſoule, and place al his hope in God!

5. No man is worthy of heauenlie comfort, vnleſſe he haue diligently exerciſed himſelfe in holy cõpunction.

If

If thou desirest true contrition of hart, retire thy selfe into some secret and solitary place, & exclude from thy mind the tumults, and vnquietnes of the world, as it is written: In your chambers be ye sory. In thy Cel thou shalt find that which abroad thou shalt often loose. Thy Cel, if thou continue in it, waxeth sweet, and if thou loue not to stay in it, it becometh irksome. If in the beginning of thy conuersion thou accustome thy self to remaine in it, and keep it wel, it wil be afterwards vnto thee a deare friend, and a most pleasant comfort.

6. In silence and quietnes a deuout soule perfecteth her selfe, and learneth the secrets of holy Scriptures. There she findeth flouds of teares, with which she may euerie night wash and cleanse her selfe, & be made so much the more familiar with her Creatour, by how much the further off she liueth from al worldly disquiet. Whoso therfore

withdraweth himſelfe frō his acquaintance and freinds; God with his holy Angels wil draw neer vnto him. It were better for a man to ly hidden, and haue care of himſelf, then being careleſſe of his ſoule, to worke miracles in the world. It is commendable for a Religious perſon to goe abroad ſeldome, to fly to be ſeen, and to be vnwilling to ſee men.

7. Why wilt thou ſee that which is not lawful for thee to haue. The world paſſeth away, and al his delights. The deſires of our ſenſuality, draw vs to walke abroad, but when the houre is paſt, what bringeſt thou home, but a burdened conſcience, and diſtracted thoughts? A ioyful going abroad bringeth often a ſorrowful comming home; and a merry euening makes a ſad morning. So al carnal ioy entreth gently, but in the end it cauſeth remorſe and deſtruction. What is elſwhere to be ſeen, which thou canſt not ſee heer?

Heer thou ſeeſt heauen and earth, and the elements, of which al other things are made.

8. What is there any where to be ſeen that can long continue vnder the ſunne? Thou thinkeſt perhaps to ſatiate thy ſelfe, and haue thy fil; but thou shalt neuer attaine it. If it were poſſible for thee to ſee al things created, preſent before thine eyes, what were it al but a vaine and vnprofitable ſight? Lift vp thine eyes to God in heauen, and aske pardon of thy ſinnes and negligences. Leaue vaine things to the vaine. Attend thou to that which God commandeth. Shut thy dore vpon thee, and cal vpon Iaſus thy beloued. Be thou with him in thy Cel, for thou shalt not find ſo great peace in any other place. If thou hadſt ſtaied within and not giuen eare to idle newes, thou haddeſt kept thy ſelfe better in good peace. But now that thou delighteſt sōtimes to heare noueltie, it is fit thou

ſuffereſt for it ſome trouble and diſquiet of mind.

CHAP. XXI.

Of Compunction of hart.

IF thou wilt profit any thing, keep thy ſelfe alwaies in the feare of God, and yeald not too much ſcope to liberty. Containe al thy ſenſes vnder the rule of diſcipline, and giue not thy ſelfe to foolish mirth. Giue thy ſelfe to compunction of hart, and thou shalt find deuotion. Compunction diſcouereth much good, which with too much libertie is quickly loſt. It is meruaile that a man can euer perfectly reioyce in this life, if he conſider his banishmēt, and weigh the many perils, wherwith his ſoule is inuironed. The leuity of our mind, & the little care wel haue of our faults, makes vs not to feel the ſor-

rowes of our ſoule.

2. But oftentimes we vainely laugh, when we haue iuſt cauſe to weep. There is neither true libertie, nor good mirth, but that which is in the feare of God, accompanied with a good conſcience. Happy is he, that can auoyd al cauſe of diſtraction, and draw himſelfe to the vnion of holy compunction. Happy is he, that can abandon al that may defile, or burden his conſcience. Fight manfully: one cuſtome ouercomes another. If thou canſt forbeare to intermeddle with that which belongs to others, they wil not hinder thee in that which thou haſt to doe.

3. Buſy not thy ſelfe in matters which appertayne to others: neither doe thou meddle at al with the affaires of thy betters. Look firſt of al to thy ſelfe, and haue a more eſpecial care to admonish they ſelf, then whomeſoeuer thou loueſt beſt. If thou haſt not the fauour of men, be not therefore grie-

ued: but let this seem vnto thee a most iust cause of griefe, that thou lookest not to thy self with that care which beseemeth the seruant of God, and a deuout religious person. It is oftentimes better and more secure, that a man hath not many consolations in this life, especially such, as are agreable to the inclination of our corrupt nature. But that we haue none at al, or doe seldome tast diuine conforts, the fault is ours, that doe not seeke for compunction of hart, nor doe wholy forsake the vaine comforts of this world.

4. Acknowledge thy selfe vnworthy of diuine comforts, and that thou hast deserued great tribulation. When a man hath perfect contrition, then is the whole world grieuous and loathsome vnto him. A good man findeth alwaies sufficient cause of teares & sorrow; for, whether he consider himselfe, or weigh the estate of his neighbour, he knoweth that none liueth here with-

out tribulation. And how much the more throughly he considereth himselfe; so much the more is his sorrow. Our sinnes and vices in which we are so plunged, that we can seldome contemplate the things of heauen, doe minister vnto vs matter of most iust sorrow and harty contrition.

5. If thou didst thinke more diligently of thy death, then of liuing long, thou wouldest without doubt be more careful in the amendment of thy life. And if thou wouldest consider within thy selfe the paines of hel, or of purgatorie, I am perswaded it would moue thee to endure any labour or paine whatsoeuer in this world, & not to feare any kind of austerity. But because these things enter not to the hart, and we stil loue that which delighteth vs, therfore we remaine cold and void of spiritual vigour.

6. Oftentimes our want of spirit is the cause, that our wretched bodies doe

ſo quickly complaine. Pray therefore with al humilitie to our Lord, that he wil vouchſafe to giue thee the ſpirit of contrition, and ſay with the Prophet: Feed me, ô Lord, with the bread of teares, and giue me to drinke with teares in meaſure.

CHAP. XXII.

Of the conſideration of humane miſerie.

MISERABLE thou art whereſoeuer thou be, and whitherſoeuer thou turneſt, if thou turneſt not thy ſelfe to God. Why art thou troubled when things ſucceed not as thou wouldeſt, and deſireſt? Who is there that hath al things as he wil? Neither I, nor thou, nor any man vpon earth. There is not any man in this world without ſome tribulation or affliction, though he be a King, or a Pope. Who thinkeſt

thou then is in beſt caſe? Truly he that willingly ſuffereth ſomething for God.

2. Many weak & feeble men ſay: Behold how wel ſuch a one liues, how rich, how powerful, how beautiful, how great a man he is: but liſt vp thine eyes to the riches of heauen, and thou shalt ſee that al temporal proſperity is nothing, ful of vncertainty, and which rather oppreſſeth then otherwiſe: for it is neuer had without ſolicitude and feare. The felicity of man conſiſteth not in hauing aboundance of temporal riches: a meane ſufficeth. It is truly miſerie enough to liue vpon earth. How much more a man deſireth to be ſpiritual, ſo much the more diſtaſtful is this preſent life vnto him: for he better perceaueth, and ſeeth more cleerly the defects of human corruption. To eate, to drinke, to watch, to ſleep, to labour, to repoſe, and to be ſubiect to al other neceſſities of nature,

is doubtleſſe a great miſerie to a deuout mind, that would gladly be free, and deliuered from al ſinne.

3. The inward man is much oppreſſed with theſe corporal neceſſities, whilſt he is in this world. And therfore the holy Prophet prayeth with great deuotion to be deliuered from them, ſaying: Deliuer me, O Lord, from my neceſſities. But woe be to them that know not their miſerie, and much more to them that loue this miſerable, and corruptible life. For ſome there be ſo dotingly affected vnto it, that although with labour and begging they ſcarce get bread to eat, yet if they might liue heer alwaies, they would care but little for the Kingdome of heauen.

4. O ſenſleſſe creatures, and infidels in hart, who lye buried ſo deep in earth, that they haue no taſt nor feeling, but of ſenſual things! But miſerable wretches, they shal in the end feel, to their coſt, how vile, and of no eſteeme was

that which they loued. The Saints of God and the deuout seruants and freinds of Christ respected little what pleased their natural inclinations, or what flourished in this life; but with their whole hopes and intentions they sought after the riches of heauen. Their whole desire was carried vp to those euerlasting treasures, which are inuisible; lest they might haue been drawn to base affections, by the loue of visible things. Loose not the hope to profit in spiritual matters: there is yet time; the houre is not yet past.

5. Why wilt thou deferre thy good purpose? Rise vp in this very instant, & begin, and say: Now is the time to worke, the time to fight: now is it a fit time to amend my selfe. When any tribulation, or affliction doth befal thee, then is the time to merit. Thou must passe through fire and water before thou come to rest. Vnlesse thou vse violence to thy selfe, thou shalt not

ouercome thy euil inclinations. As long as we carry about with vs this frayle body of ours we can neuer be without ſinne, nor liue without tediouſnes and griefe. We would gladly enioy quietnes, and be deliuered from al miſerie; but for that we haue by ſinne loſt our innocency, we haue togeather with it loſt alſo our happines. And therfore it behoueth vs to haue patience, and to expect the mercie of God til this iniquity haue an end, and that which is mortal be ſwallowed vp of life.

6. O, how great is the frailty of man alwaies inclined to euil! To day thou confeſſeſt thy ſinnes, and to morrow thou committeſt againe the ſame which thou didſt confeſſe. Now thou purpoſeſt to take heed, and within an houre thou doſt as if thou hadſt made no purpoſe at al. We may therfore with great reaſon humble ourſelues, and neuer admit anie thought of our owne eſteeme, being ſo weak

as we are, and subiect to euery change. Ful soone (God knowes) is that lost by negligence, which with much labour was hardly gotten by grace.

7. What wil become of vs in the end, who doe so timely begin to wax could? Woe be vnto vs, if we wil now giue ourselues to ease, as if al were already in peace and security; when as yet there scarce appeareth so much as any signe of true sanctity in our conuersation. It were needful that we were taught good manners againe like Children, if so perhaps there might be some more hope of our amendement and profit in spirit.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of the consideration of death.

THE houre of death wil quickly ouertake thee, and therefore look how thou liueſt. To day a man is liuing, and to morrow he doth not appeare; & being once out of ſight, he is alſo quickly out of mind. O dulneſſe and hardneſſe of man's hart, who thinketh only on that he ſeeth, and foreſeeth not that which is to come! Thou shouldeſt alwaies ſo order thy thoughts and actiõs, as if this verie day thou wert to depart this life. If thou hadſt a good conſcience, thou wouldeſt not much feare death. It is better to auoyd ſinne then to fly death. If thou be not prepared to day; how wilt thou be prepared to morrow? To morrow is vncertaine, and whether thou shalt ſee it or no thou knoweſt not.

2. What doth it auaile vs to liue long, when we doe so little amend? A long life doth not alwaies make vs better, nay rather it oftentimes heapeth vpon vs a greater load of sinnes. O that we had spent one day wel in this world! Many doe reckon the yeares of their conuersion, but ful slender oftentimes is the fruit of amendment. If it be a dreadful thing to die, perhaps it wil be more dangerous for thee to liue long. Blessed is he, that hath alwaies before his eyes the houre of his death; and disposeth himselfe daily therunto. If thou hast at any time seen a man die, thinke with thy self, that thou must one day passe the same way.

3. When it is morning, think that perhaps thou shalt not liue vntil night; and when euening comes, doe not dare to promise vnto thy-self the next morning. Be alwaies ready and so order thy life, that death may euer take thee vnprepared. Many

die ſuddainly: for the Sonne of man wil come when we leaſt thinke of it. When that laſt houre shal come, thou wilt begin to think farre otherwiſe of thy life, and much lament, that thou haſt been ſo ſlack and negligent.

4. O, how wiſe and happy is he, that now laboureth to be ſuch in his life, as he wisheth to be found at the houre of his death! For the perfect contempt of the world, the feruent deſire to profit in vertue, the loue of diſcipline, the labour of pennance, the readineſſe of obedience, the forſaking of our-ſelues, and the bearing patienly of al aduerſity for the loue of Chriſt, wil giue great confidence of a happy end. Thou maiſt doe much good whiles thou art wel; but when thou art ſick, what thou wilt be able to doe, I know not. Few doe grow better, and amend themſelues with ſicknes; as alſo they that wander much abroad, ſeldome become holy.

5.

5. Truſt not vpon thy freinds or neighbours; neither doe thou put off to future times the care of thy ſoules health; for thou ſhalt ſooner be forgotten, then thou doſt imagine. It is better now to prouide in time, and doe ſome good before thou goeſt, then to truſt in the help of others, when thou art gone. If thou haſt no care of thy ſelfe now when thou haſt time, who wil be careful for thee hereafter? The time which now thou haſt is very precious. Now are the daies of health. Now is the time acceptable. But alas, that thou ſpendeſt it ſo little to thy profit, in which thou mighteſt gaine eternal life! The time wil come, when thou wilt deſire one day, or one houre to amend, and I cannot aſſure thee, that thou ſhalt obtaine it.

6. O, my deareſt Brother, from how great danger maiſt thou deliuer thy ſelfe? From how great feare maiſt thou be freed, if thou doſt now liue fearful,

and careful of thy death. Labour to liue in such sort, that at the houre of death thou maist rather reioyce, then feare. Learne now to dye to the world, that thou maist then begin to liue with Christ. Learne now to contemne al earthly things, that thou maist then freely goe to Christ. Chastice now thy body with pennance, that thou maist then haue assured confidence.

7. Ah foole, why dost thou thinke thou shalt liue long, being not certaine of so much as one day. How many haue been deceaued, and taken out of this world on a suddaine, when they least expected it! How often hast thou heard, how such an one was suddainly slaine, another was drowned, another falling from some high place, brake his neck, another dyed at his meate, another when he was playing: one came to his end by fire, another by sword, another by plague, another dyed by the hands of theeues. So as death is the end of al,

and the life of man passeth away like a shaddow.

8. Who wil remember thee; and who wil pray for thee after thy death? Doe now, beloued Brother, doe now what thou canst, for thou knoweſt not how soone thou shalt dye, nor what shal befal thee after thy death. Now whilſt thou haſt time, heap togeather eternal riches. Thinke on nothing, but on the health of thy soule. Haue care only on that which belongeth to God. Make the Saints of God thy freinds by honouring them, and imitating their vertues, that when thou departeſt this life, they may receaue thee into their euerlasting dwellings.

9. Esteeme thy-selfe as a pilgrime, and stranger vpon earth, and as one to whom the affaires of this world doe nothing appertaine. Keep thy hart free, and lifted vp to God: for thou haſt not heer any permanent Citty. Send thither thy prayers dayly with sighes,

and teares; that thy ſoule may deſerue to paſſe with much happines to our Lord after death.

CHAP. XXIIII.

Of Iudgement, and the punishment of ſinne.

IN al things conſider the end, & how thou wilt be able to ſtand before that ſeuere Iudge, from whom nothing can be hidden, and is not appeaſed with guifts, nor admitteth excuſes, but iudgeth according to iuſtice. O moſt wretched and fooliſh ſinner, that feareſt ſomtimes the countenance of an angry mā., what anſwer wilt thou make to God, to whome al thy wickednes is knowne? Why prouideſt thou not for thy-ſelf againſt that rigorous day of iudgement, in which no man can be excuſed, or defended by another, but

euery one wil be burden enough to himselfe ? Now thy paines are profitable, thy teares acceptable, thy cries are heard, thy sorrow satisfieth for thy sinnes, and purgeth thy soule.

2. The patient man hath a great and healthful purgatory, who receauing iniuries, grieueth more for the others malice, then for his owne wrongs; prayeth willingly for his aduersaries, and from his hart forgiueth their offences; delayeth not to aske forgiuenes of whomsoeuer he hath offended; is sooner moued to compassion then to anger; vseth often violence to himselfe; and laboureth with his whole force to subdue the flesh in al things to the spirit. It is better to purge our sinnes & vices now, then to reserue them for purgatory. Verily the inordinate loue we beare to our-selues deceaueth vs.

3. What other thing shal that fire feed on, but thy sinnes? How much the more thou spareſt thy-self now, and

followeſt the deſires of thy corrupt nature : ſo much the more grieuouſly shalt thou be punished heerafter : and ſo much the more matter doſt thou keep for that purging fire. In the ſelfe ſame wherin a man hath ſinned, shal he be more grieuouſly punished. There shal the ſlouthful be pricked forwards, with burning goads. There shal the gluttons be tormented with inſatiable hunger and thirſt. There shal the laſciuious, and the louers of pleaſures be couered ouer with burning pitch and brimſtone. The enuious like raging dogs, shal there howle for griefe.

4. There is no vice, that shal not haue his proper torment. The proud shal be ful of al shame and confuſion. The couetous shal be in miſerable want. One houre of paine there shal be more sharp, then a hundred yeares of moſt hard pennance heer. There is no reſt there, nor comfort for the damned. Heer yet ſomtimes our labours ceaſe,

and we enioy the comfort of our freinds. Be now solicitous and sorrowful for thy sinnes; that in the day of iudgement thou maist be secure in the company of the blessed soules. For then shal the iust stand in great constancy, against those that afflicted & oppressed them. Then shal he stand to iudge, who now doth humbly submit himselfe to the iudgement of men. Then shal the poore and humble haue great confidence, and the proud shal be compassed about on al sides with feare.

5. Then wil it appeare, that he was wise in this world, who had heer learned to be as a fool and dispised for Christ. Then shal affliction patiently suffered delight vs, and iniquity shal stop her mouth. Then shal the deuout reioyce, and the irreligious mourne. Then shal the chastised flesh more flourish, then if it had been alwaies nourished in delights. Then shal the poore garment shine, and the precious

robes appeare contemptible. Then shal the meane cottage be more commended, then the sumptuous pallace. Then wil constant patience more auaile vs, then al earthly power. Then wil simple obedience be more esteemed, then al worldly wisdome.

6. Then shal a good and pure conscience yeald vs more comfort, then the profound learning of Philosophy. Then shal the cõtempt of riches weigh more then al the worldling's treasures. Then wilt thou be more comforted that thou hast praied deuoutly, then that thou hast fared daintily. Then wilt thou be more ioyful that thou hast obserued silence, then that thou hast talked much. Then wil good works appeare of much more esteem, then faire words. Then a strict life and hard pennance wil be more pleasing, then al earthly delights. Accustome thy self now to suffer a little, that thou maist then be deliuered from more grieuous paines. Proue

heer first what thou canst endure heerafter. If now thou canst beare so little, how wilt thou be able to endure euerlasting torments? If now a little suffering make thee so impatient, what wil hel-fire doe heerafter? Assure thy selfe, thou canst not haue two Paradises. It is impossible for thee to enioy delights heere in this world, and raigne heerafter with Christ in heauen.

7. If thou hadst hitherto liued alwaies in honours aud delights; what would it auaile thee, if thou shouldest presently dy? Al is vanity, but to loue God, and only to serue him. And he that loueth God with his whole hart, needeth to feare neither death, punishment, iudgement, nor hel: for perfect loue giues secure accesse to God. But he that delighteth alwaies in sinne, what wonder though he alwaies feare death, and be terrified with the thought of Iudgement. Yet it is good, that if loue be not of force to withhould thee from

sinne, that at least the feare of hel may restrayne thee. And he that layeth aside the feare of God; can neuer continue long in good state, but falleth quickly into the snares of the diuel.

CHAP. XXV.

Of the feruent amendmend of our whole life.

BE watchful and diligent in the seruice of God, and often think with thy selfe wherefore thou camest, and why thou didst leaue the world. Was it not that thou mightest liue to God, and become a spiritual man? Goe on therfore with courage: thou shalt shortly receaue the reward of thy labours, and there shal be no more feare nor sorrow in the confines of thy habitation. Thou must labour heer a while: thou shalt afterward haue great rest;

yea euerlasting ioy. If thou continuest faithful and diligent in seruing of God, doe not doubt but God wil be faithful & liberal in giuing thee reward. Thou oughtest to haue a good hope of getting the victory, but thou must not make thy-selfe assured therof, lest thou wax negligent, or be puffed vp with pride.

2. When one that was in great anxiety of mind, often wauering between feare and hope, did once, being oppressed with griefe, prostrate himselfe in a Church in prayer before an Altar, and sayd within himselfe: O, if I knew that I should yet perseuer! he presently heard as it were a voice from God, which said: What if thou diddest know it, what wouldst thou doe? Doe now what thou wouldest doe then, and thou shal be secure. And being herewith comforted, and strengthned in mind, he committed himselfe wholy to the wil of God, and that noysome

anxiety ceaſed : neither had he any mind to ſearch curiouſly any further, to know what should befal him ; but rather laboured to vnderſtād what was the perfect, and acceptable wil of God, for the beginning and accomplishing of euery good worke.

3. Hope in our Lord, and doe good, ſaith the Prophet, and inhabit the land, and thou shalt be fed in the riches therof. One thing there is that draweth many back from that ſpiritual good, & the diligent amendment of their liues: the horrour of the difficulty, and the labour of the combat. But they aboue others profit moſt in vertue, that endeauour moſt to ouercome thoſe things which are greuious, and contrary vnto them. For there a man profiteth more, and deſerueth greater grace, where he more ouercometh and mortifieth himſelfe in ſpirit.

4. But al men haue not alike to ouercome and mortify : yet he that is zea-

lous & diligent, though he haue more passions, shal profit more in vertue, then another that is of a more temperate disposition, if he be lesse feruent in the pursuit of vertue. Two things chiefly help to our amendment, to wit, to withdraw our-selues violently frō that to which nature is viciously inclined, & to labour earnestly for that vertue, which we most want. Be careful also to auoid with great diligēce, those things in thy selfe, which doe most displease thee in others.

5. Gather some profit to thy soule out of euery occasion, and whersoeuer thou be; so as if thou seest or heerest any good, stir vp thy selfe to the imitation therof. But if thou seest any thing worthy of reproofe, beware thou doe not the same. And if at any time thou hast done it, labour quickly to amend it. As thine eye obserueth others, so art thou also noted againe by others. O, how sweet and comfor-

table a thing it is, to see the seruants of Christ feruent and deuout, endued with vertuous and decent manners! And on the contrary, how pittiful and grieuous a thing it is, to see them that liue in a dissolute and disordered sort, not applying themselues to that, for which they were called! O, how great domage and great danger is it, to neglect the good purposes of their vocation, and to busy themselues in that which appertaineth not vnto them, nor is committed to their care!

6. Be mindful of the purpose thou hast made, and haue alwaies before the eyes of thy soule the picture of thy Sauiour crucifyed. Thou hast good cause to be ashamed, looking vpon the life of Christ, seing thou hast so slackly endeauoured to conforme thy selfe vnto him, though thou hast walked a long time in the way of the seruice of God. A Religious person that exerciseth himselfe seriously, and de-

uoutly in the moſt holy life, & paſſion of our Lord, shal there aboundantly find whatſoeuer is neceſſary, and profitable for him; neither shal he need to ſeeke any thing elſwhere, but only in Ieſus. O, If Ieſus crucifyed would come into our harts, how quickly and fully should we be inſtructed in al truth!

7. A feruent Religious perſon taketh, and beareth al wel that is commanded him: but he that is negligent and cold, hath tribulation vpon tribulation, and on al ſides is afflicted: for he is void of inward conſolation, and is forbidden to ſeek external comforts. A Religious perſon that liueth not according to diſcipline, is in great danger of the ruine of his ſoule. He that ſeeketh liberty and eaſe, shal euer liue in diſquiet: for one thing or other wil alwaies diſpleaſe him.

8. How doe ſo many other religious perſons, who liue vnder the ſtrict rule

of Monastical discipline? They seldome goe abroad, they liue retiredly, they feed meanly, they are cloathed courfely, they labour much, speak little, watch long, rise early, spend much time in prayer, read often, and keep themselues in al kind of discipline. Consider the Carthusians, Cistercians, and the Religious men and women of diuers Orders, how they rise euery night to sing praises vnto God. And how vnseemly then it is for thee to be slouthful in so holy a worke, whenas so great multitudes of Religious persons doe begin to glorify God.

9. O, that we had nothing els to doe, but alwaies with our mouth, and whole hart to praise our Lord God! O, that thou mightest neuer haue need to eate nor drinke, nor sleep; but mightest alwaies praise God, and only employ thy-selfe in the exercises of spirit: thou shouldst then be much more happy, then now thou art, when for so many necessi-

neceſſities, thou art cõſtrained to ſerue thy body. Would God theſe neceſſities were not at al, but only the ſpiritual refections of the ſoule, which (alas) we taſt of too ſeldome.

10. When a man commeth to that eſtate, that he ſeeketh no comfort of any creature, then doth he begin to take perfect contentment and delight in God. Then shal he be contented with whatſoeuer doth befal him in this world. Then shal he neither reioyce in great matters, nor be ſorrowful for ſmal, but with great integrity and confidence commit himſelfe to God; who shal be vnto him al in al, to whom nothing doth perish, nor dy, but al things doe liue vnto him, and ſerue him at a beck without delay.

11. Remember alwaies the end, and how that time loſt neuer returnes. Without care and diligence thou shalt neuer get vertue. If thou beginneſt to waxe cold, it wil be euil with thee:

but if thou giue thy ſelfe to feruour of ſpirit, thou ſhalt find much peace, and feel leſſe labour, through the aſſiſtance of God's grace, & loue of vertue. The feruent and diligent man is ready, and prepared for al things. It is harder to reſiſt vices and paſſions, then to toile in bodily labours. He that auoideth not ſmal faults, by little and little falleth into greater. Thou wilt alwaies reioyce in the euening, if thou ſpend the day profitably. Be watchful ouer thy-ſelfe, ſtir vp thy ſelfe, warne thy-ſelfe, and whatſoeuer becomes of others, neglect not thy-ſelfe. The greater violence thou vſeſt againſt thy-ſelf, the more thou ſhalt profit.

The end of the firſt Booke.

OF THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST.

THE SECOND BOOK.

CHAP. I.

Of ſpiritual conuerſation.

THE Kingdome of God is within you, ſayth our Lord. Turne thee with thy whole hart vnto our Lord, and forſake this miſerable world, and thy ſoule ſhalt find reſt. Learne to deſpiſe exteriour things, and to giue thy-ſelf to the interiour, and thou ſhalt perceaue the

Kinddom of God to come into thee. For the Kingdome of God is peace, and ioy in the holy Ghoſt, which is not giuen to the wicked. Chriſt wil come into thee, and shew thee his diuine comfort, if thou prepare for him a worthy manſion within thee. Al his glory & beauty is within, and there he pleaſeth himſelfe. The inward man he often viſits, & hath with him ſweet diſcourſes, pleaſant comfort, much peace, wonderful familiarity.

2. O, faithful ſoule, make ready thy hart for this bridegrome, that he may vouchſafe to come vnto thee, and dwel within thee. For he ſaith: If any loue me, he wil keep my words, and we wil come vnto him, and wil make our aboad with him. Giue therfore vnto Chriſt a place in thy hart, and deny entrance to al others. When thou haſt Chriſt, thou art rich, and he wil ſuffice thee. He wil be thy faithful and prouident helper in al things, ſo as thou

shalt not need to truſt in men. For men are ſoone changed, and quickly deceyued; but Chriſt remaineth for euer, & ſtandeth firmely vntò the end.

3. There is little truſt to be put in a fraile and mortal man, though he be profitable and deare vnto thee: neither oughteſt thou much to be grieued, if ſomtimes he croſſe, and contradict thee. They that to day take thy part, to morrow may be againſt thee; and ſo on the contrary, they often turne like vnto the wind. Put al thy truſt in God, and feare, and loue him: He wil anſwer for thee, and doe in al things what is beſt. Thou haſt not heer a dwelling Citty: and wherſoeuer thou be, thou art a ſtranger and pilgrime: neither shalt thou euer haue reſt, vnleſſe thou be perfectly vnited vnto Chriſt.

4. Why doſt thou linger, and make delaies heer, ſince this is not the place of thy reſt? In heauen ought to be thy

dwelling, and al earthly things are to be regarded as it were in the way. Al things passe away, and thou togeather with them. Beware thou cleaue not vnto them, lest thou be enthralled, and so doest perish. Let thy thought be on the highest, and thy prayer directed vnto Christ without ceasing. If thou canst not contemplate high and heauenly things, rest thy selfe in the passion of Christ, and dwel willingly in the wounds of his sacred body. For if thou fly deuoutly vnto his holy wounds, and to the precious markes of his passion, thou shalt feel great comfort in tribulation: neither wilt thou much care for being despised of men, and wilt easily beare the words of slanderous tongues.

5. Christ was also in the world despised, and in great necessity: forsaken by his acquaintance, and freinds in the middest of slanders. Christ would suffer & be contemned; and darest thou

complaine? Christ had aduersaries & and back-biters; wilt thou haue al men thy freinds and benefactours? For what shal thy patience be crowned, if no aduersity happen vnto thee? If thou wilt suffer no aduersity, how wilt thou be the freind of Christ? Suffer with Christ and for Christ, if thou desire to raigne with Christ.

6. If thou haddest once perfectly entred into the hart of Iesus, and tasted a little of his burning loue; then wouldest thou not weigh thy owne commodity or discommodity, but wouldest rather reioyce at slanders, when they should chance to be cast vpon thee: for the loue of Iesus maketh a man to despise himselfe. A louer of Iesus, and of truth, and a true spiritual person, and free from inordinate affections, can freely turne himselfe vnto God, & lift himselfe aboue himselfe in spirit, and with great ioy of his soule rest in God.

7. He that iudgeth of al things as they are, and not as they are ſaid, and eſteemed to be, is truly wiſe, & taught rather by God then men. He that can liue ſpiritually, and make ſmal reckning of outward things, neither requireth places, nor attendeth times for performing of deuout exerciſes. A ſpiritual man quickly recollecteth himſelfe: becauſe he neuer yealdeth ouer himſelfe wholy to outward things. He is not hindred by outward labour or buſines which may be neceſſary for the time: but as things fal out, ſo he frameth himſelfe vnto them. He that hath wel ordered and diſpoſed al things within, careth little for the vaine inuentions, and peruerſe inclinations of men. So much is a man hindred and diſtracted, how much he draweth matters vnto himſelfe.

8. If al went wel with thee, and thou hadſt thy hart wel purged, al things would fal out to thy good and profit.

But many things displease, and often trouble thee, because thou art not yet perfectly dead vnto thy selfe, nor free from the affection of earthly things. Nothing so defileth and intangleth the hart of man, as the impure loue to creatures. If thou refuse outward comfort; thou wilt be able to contemplate the things of heauen, and often receiue internal ioy.

CHAP. II.

Of humble submission.

RESpect not much who is with thee, or who is against thee. Endeauour, and take care, that God may be for thee in euery thing thou doest. Haue a good conscience, and God wil defend thee. For whom God wil help, no malice of man can hurt. If thou canst hould thy peace and suffer, without

doubt thou shalt see that our Lord wil help thee. He knoweth the time, and manner how to deliuer thee, and therfore thou oughtest to resigne thy selfe vnto him. It belongs to God to help, & to deliuer from al shame. Oftentimes it is very profitable, for the better keeping of humility, that others know & reprehend our faults.

2. When a man humbleth himselfe for his faults, then he easily pacifieth others, & quickly satisfieth those that are offended with him. God protecteth and deliuereth the humble: he loueth and comforteth the humble: vnto the humble man he inclineth himselfe: vnto the humble he giueth great grace; and after his humiliation, he raiseth him vnto glory. Vnto the humble he reuealeth his secrets, and sweetly draweth and inuiteth him vnto himselfe. The humble when he hath receaued confusion, is in peace, for that he resteth in God, and relieth not on the

world. Doe not thinke that thou haſt profite dany thing, vnleſſe thou eſteem thy ſelfe inferiour to al.

CHAP. III.

Of a good and peaceable man.

FIrſt keep thy-ſelfe in peace, and then maiſt thou pacify others. A peaceable man doth more good, then he that is wel learned. A paſſionate man turneth good into euil, and eaſily belieueth the worſt. A good peaceable man turneth al things into good. He that is wel in peace, is not ſuſpicious of any. But he that is diſcontented, and troubled, is toſſed with diuers ſuſpicions: he is neither quiet himſelf, nor ſuffereth others to be quiet. He often ſpeaketh that which he ought not to ſpeake; and omitteth that which were more expedient for him to doe.

He considereth what others are bound to doe: and neglecteth that which he is bound to himselfe. First therefore haue a careful zeale ouer thy-self, and then thou maist iustly shew thy selfe zealous of thy neighbours good.

2. Thou knowest wel how to excuse and colour thine owne deeds, and thou wilt not receaue the excuses of others. It were more meet, that thou didest accuse thy self, and excusedst thy brother. If thou wilt be borne withal, beare also with another. Behold how fare off thou art as yet from true charity and humility, which knoweth not how to be angry with any, or to be moued with indignation, but only against him selfe. It is no great matter to conuerse with the good, and those that are of a gentle disposition, for that is naturally pleasing to al, and euery one willingly enioyeth peace, and loueth those best that agree with him. But to be able to liue peaceably with the vnquiet, and

peruerſe minds, or with the diſorderly, or ſuch as contradict vs, is a great grace and very commandable.

3. Some there are, that keep themſelues in peace, and are in peace alſo with others. And there are ſome, that neither are in peace themſelues, nor ſuffer others to be in peace: they are troubleſome to others, but alwaies more troubleſome to themſelues. And others there are that keep themſelues in peace, and labour to bring others vnto peace. Our whole peace in this miſerable life, conſiſteth rather in humble ſuffering, then in not feeling aduerſities. He that can beſt tel how to ſuffer, wil beſt keep himſelfe in peace. He is a conquerour of himſelfe, a Lord of the world, freind of Chriſt, and heyre of heauen.

CHAP. IV.

Of a pure mind, and vpright intention.

WIth two wings man is lifted vp from earthly vanities, that is, with ſimplicity, and purity. Simplicity ought to be in our intention: Purity in our affection. Simplicity fixeth the eyes of the ſoule in God. Purity apprehendeth and taſteth his ſweetnes. No good action wil hinder thee, if thou be inwardly free from inordinate affection. If thou intend and ſeek nothing els but the wil of God, and the profit of thy neighbour, thou shalt enioy internal liberty. If thy hart were ſincere and vpright, then euery creature would be vnto thee a looking-glaſſe of life, and a book of holy doctrine. There is no creature ſo little &

abiect, that repreſenteth not the goodnes of God.

2. If in thine owne hart thou wert good and pure, then thou wouldeſt be able to ſee and vnderſtand al things without any impediment. A pure hart penetrateth heauen, and pierceth the depth of hel. Such as euery one is inwardly, ſo he iudgeth outwardly. If there be ioy in the world, ſurely a man of a pure hart poſſeſſeth it. And if there be any-where tribulation and affliction, an euil conſcience feels it. As iron put into the fire leeſeth his ruſt, and becometh bright like fire: ſo he that wholy turning himſelfe vnto God, becommeth feruent, & is changed into a new man.

3. When one beginneth to wax cold, then he is afraid of a ſmal labour, and willingly receaueth external comfort. But when he once beginneth to ouercome himſelf perfectly, and to walke mãfully in the way of God: then

he esteemeth those things to be light, which before seemed grieuous vnto him.

CHAP. V.

Of the consideration of ones selfe.

WE cannot trust much to ourselues, for that grace oftentimes and vnderstanding is wanting. There is but little light in vs, and that which we haue, we quickly loose by our negligence. And oftentimes we doe not perceaue our own inward blindnes. We often doe euil, and excuse it worse. We are somtimes moued with passion, and we thinke it to be zeale. We reprehend smal things in others, and passe ouer greater matters in our selues. We quickly feel, and weigh what we suffer at the hands of others: but we mind not

not what others ſuffer from vs. He that doth wel and deeply conſider his own works, wil find little cauſe to iudge hardly of another

2. A ſpiritual man preferreth the care of himſelfe, before al other cares. And he that diligently attendeth vnto himſelfe, doth ſeldome ſpeake much of others. Thou wilt neuer be recollected and deuout, vnleſſe thou paſſe ouer other mens matters with ſilence, & look eſpecially to thy ſelfe. If thou attend wholy vnto God and thy ſelfe, thou wilt be little moued with whatſoeuer thou ſeeſt abroad. Where art thou, when thou art not with thy ſelfe? And when thou haſt run ouer al, what haſt thou profited, if thou doeſt neglect thy-ſelfe? If thou deſireſt peace of mind and true vnion, thou muſt eſteeme little of al earthly things, and look only to thy ſelfe.

3. Thou ſhalt therfore profit much, if thou keep thy-ſelfe free from al

temporal cares. Thou shalt hinder thy selfe greatly, if thou esteem anie thing of this world. Let nothing be great vnto thee, nothing high, nothing grateful, nothing acceptable, but only God himselfe, purely, or that which is for God. Esteem al cõfort vaine which thou receaueſt from any creature. A soule that loueth God, despiseth al things that be inferiour vnto God. God alone is euerlasting, and of infinit greatnes, filling al creatures: the comfort of the soule, and the true ioy of the hart.

CHAP. VI.

Of the comfort of a good conscience.

THE glorie of a good man, is the testimony of a good conscience. Haue a good conscience, and thou shalt

euer haue ioy. A good conſcience is able to beare much, and is cheerful in aduerſities. An euil conſcience is alwaies feareful and vnquiet. Thou shalt reſt ſweetly, if thy hart doth not reprehend thee. Doe thou neuer reioyce, but when thon haſt done wel. Sinners haue neuer true mirth, nor feel inward peace: becauſe there is no peace to the impious, ſaith our Lord. And if they should ſay: We are in peace, no euil shal fal vpon vs, and who shal dare to hurt vs? belieue them not: for vpon a ſuddaine wil ariſe the wrath of God, and their deeds shal be turned into nothing, and their conceits shalt perish.

2. To glorie in tribulation is no hard thing for him that loueth. For to glory ſo, is to glory in the Croſſe of our Lord. That glory is short, which is giuen and receaued from men. Sorrow alwaies accompanieth the glory of the world. The glory of the good is in their

conſciences, and not in the tongues of men. The gladnes of the iuſt is of God, and in God: & their ioy is of the truth. He that deſireth true and euerlaſting glorie, careth not for that which paſſeth away with time. And he that ſeeketh temporal glorie, or contemneth it not from his hart, shewes himſelfe but little to eſteem of the glorie of heauen. He enioyeth great tranquillitie and peace of mind, that careth neither for the prayſes, nor diſpraiſes of men.

3. He wil eaſily be content and pacified, whoſe conſcience is pure. He is not the more holy, though thou commend him: nor the more abiect though thou diſpraiſe him. What thou art, that thou art: neither canſt thou be truly ſaid to be greater, then what thou art in the ſight of God. If thou conſider what thou art within thee, thou wilt not care what men ſay of thee. Man ſeeth in the face, but God looketh into the hart. Man conſidereth the deeds,

but God weigheth the intention. To doe alwaies wel, and to esteeme little of himselfe, is a token of an humble mind. To refuse to be comforted by any creature, is a signe of great puritie, and inward confidence.

4. He that seeketh no outward witnes for himselfe, doth shew that he hath wholy committed himselfe vnto God. For not he that commendeth himselfe, the same is approued (saith S. Paul) but whom God commendeth. To walke inwardly with God, and not to be possessed with any outward affection, is the state of an inward and spiritual man.

CHAP. VII.

Of the loue of IESVS aboue al things.

BLESSED is he that vnderſtandeth what it is to loue Ieſus, and to deſpiſe himſelfe for Ieſus. Thou oughteſt to leaue thy beloued, for thy beloued; for that Ieſus wil be beloued alone aboue al things. The loue of things created is deceitful and vnconſtant: the loue of Ieſus is faithful and conſtant. He that cleaueth vnto creatures shal fal with that which is ſubiect to fal. He that imbraceth Ieſus shal ſtand firmely for euer. Loue him, and keep him for thy freind, who when al goe away, wil not forſake thee, nor ſuffer thee to perish in the end. Thou muſt once be left of men, whether thou wilt or no.

2. Liue and dye with Ieſus; and commit thy ſelfe, vnto his truſt, who when al faile, can alone help thee. Thy beloued is of that nature, that he wil none of that which appertaineth to others: but wil haue thy hart alone, and ſit like a King in his owne throne. If thou couldeſt purge thy-ſelfe perfectly of al creatures, Ieſus would willingly dwel with thee. Whatſoeuer thou putteſt in men, out of Ieſus, is al no better then loſt. Truſt not nor rely vpō a reed ful of wind: for that al flesh is as hay, and al the glory therof shal wither away, as the flower of the field.

3. Thou shalt quickly be deceaued, if thou look only to the outward shew of men. And if in them thou ſeekeſt thy comfort and profit: thou shalt often feel loſſe. If thou ſeekeſt Ieſus in al things, thou shalt ſurely find Ieſus. But if thou ſeekeſt thy-ſelfe, thou shalt alſo find thy-ſelfe, but to thy owne harme. For man doth more hurt

himselfe, if he seek not Iesus, then the whole world, and al his aduersaries cold annoy him.

CHAP. VIII.

Of familiar conuersation with IESVS.

WHEN Iesus is present, al is wel, and nothing seemeth difficult: but when Iesus is absent, euery thing is hard. When Iesus speaketh not inwardly vnto vs, our comfort is nothing worth: but if Iesus speake but one world, we feel much consolation. Did not Marie Magdalen presently rise from the place where she wept, when Martha said vnto her: Thy maister is heer, and calleth thee? Happy is the houre when Iesus calleth from teares to spiritual ioy. How dry and hard art thou without Iesus? How foolish and

vaine, if thou desire any thing out of Iesus? Is not this a greater losse, then if thou wouldest loose the whole world?

2. What can the world profit thee without Iesus? To be without Iesus is a grieuous hel: and to be with Iesus is a sweet Paradise. If Iesus be with thee, no enemy can hurt thee. He that findeth Iesus, findeth a good treasure: yea a good aboue al goods. And he that leeseth Iesus leeseth too much, and more then the whole world. He is most poore that liueth without Iesus: and he most rich that is wel with Iesus.

3. It is a great skil to know how to conuerse with Iesus, and a great wisdome to know how to keep Iesus. Be humble, and peaceable, and Iesus wil be with thee. Be deuout and quiet, and Iesus wil stay with thee. Thou maist driue away Iesus and loose his grace, if thou giuest thy selfe to outward things. And if thou shouldest driue him from thee, and loose him, vnto whom wilt

thou fly, and what freinds wilt thou then seeke? Without a freind thou canst not wel liue: and if Iesus be not aboue al a freind vnto thee; thou shalt be tooto sorrowful and desolate. Thou doest therefore foolishly, if thou doest trust or reioyce in any other. It is better for thee to haue al the world against thee, then Iesus offended with thee. Amongst al things therfore that be deare vnto thee, let Iesus alone be thy chiefest beloued.

4. Loue al for Iesus, but Iesus for himselfe. Iesus Christ alone is especially to be beloued; who alone is found to be good, & faithful aboue al freinds. For him, and in him, let aswel freinds as foes be deare vnto thee: and al these are to be prayed for, that al may know and loue him. Neuer desire to be singularly commended or beloued, for that appertaineth only vnto God, who hath none like vnto himselfe. Neither doe thou desire that the part of any

should be set on thee, nor doe thou set thy hart on the loue of any: but let Iesus be in thee, and in euery vertuous & good man.

5. Be pure and free within, and intangle not thy hart with anie creature. Thou oughtest to be as it were naked, & carry a pure hart to God, if thou wilt consider, and proue, and see how sweet our Lord is. And truly, vnlesse thou be preuented, and drawne by his grace, thou shalt neuer attaine to that happines to forsake and cast away al, that thou alone maist be vnited to him alone. For when the grace of God commeth vnto a man, then he is strong, and nothing is hard vnto him. And when it goeth away, he is poore & weake, and as it were left vnto the wil of whomsoeuer wil afflict him. In this thou oughtest not to be deiected, nor despaire; but to resigne thy-selfe with al indifferencie vnto the wil of God, and to beare al things that befal thee for the glorie

of Christ: for after winter followeth summer, after night commeth day, and after a tempest faire weather.

CHAP. IX.

Of the want of al comfort.

IT is no great matter to despise humane comfort, when we haue diuine. It is much and verie much, to be able to want both humane and diuine comfort: and for the honour and glorie of God, to be willing to endure desolation of hart; and to seek himselfe in nothing, nor to regard his owne merit. What great matter is it, if thou be cheerful and deuout at the comming of heauenly grace? This houre is wished for of al men. He rideth easily whome the grace of God carrieth. And what meruaile, if he feel not his burden who is borne vp by the Almighty, and led

by the greateſt guide?

2. We are alwaies willing to haue ſomething for our comfort: and a man doth hardly put off, and forſake himſelf. The holie martyr Saint Laurence ouercame the world with his Prelate: becauſe he diſpiſed whatſoeuer ſeemed delightſome in the world: and for the loue of Chriſt he patiently ſuffered the high Prieſt of God S. Sixtus to be taken from him, whome he moſt loued. He ouercame therefore the loue of man by the loue of the Creatour; and he rather choſe the diuine pleaſure, then humane comfort. See thou alſo learne to forſake ſome neceſſarie thing, and a beloued freind for the loue of God. Be not grieued when thou art forſaken by a freind, knowing that we al at length muſt be ſeparated one from another.

3. A man muſt fight long, and with a conſtant mind, before he get the victorie, and be able to place his whole hart in God. When a man confideth in

himſelfe, he eaſily ſlideth vnto humane comforts. But a true louer of Chriſt, & a diligent follower of vertue, giueth not himſelfe to ſuch ſolace, nor ſeeketh ſenſible ſweetnes: but rather forcible exerciſes, and to ſuſtaine hard labours for Chriſt.

4. When therfore ſpiritual comfort is giuen thee from God, receaue it thankefully: but know that it is the guift of God, not any deſert of thine. Be not puffed-vp, ioy not too much, neither doe thou preſume vainely: but be rather the more humble for that grace, and more wary and feareful in al thy actions, for that houre wil paſſe away & temptation wil ſucceed. When conſolation is taken from thee, deſpaire not preſently; but vith humilitie and patience attend the heauenlie viſitation: for God is able againe to giue thee greater conſolation This is not new, nor ſtrange vnto them, that haue experience in the way of

God: for in the great Saints and ancient Prophets, there was oftentimes such kind of alteration.

5. For which cause one when he had grace, said: I said in my plenty, I wil not be moued euerlastingly. But when this was gone from him, he addeth what he found in himself, saying: Thou turnedst thy face from me, and I became troubled. Yet doth he not despaire in the middest of these changes, but more earnestly prayeth vnto our Lord, and saith: Vnto thee (ô Lord) I wil cry, and I wil pray vnto my God. Lastly he receaueth the fruit of his prayer, & witnesseth that he was heard, saying: Our Lord hath heard me, and taken pitty on me: our Lord is become my helper. But wherin? Thou hast turned (saith he) my sorrow into ioy, and thou hast compassed me about with gladnes. If great Saints haue been so dealt withal, we that are poore and weake ought not to despaire, if

we be sometimes feruent & sometimes cold: for the Spirit commeth and goeth, according to the good pleasure of his wil. For which cause blessed Iob saith: Thou visitest him early in the morning, and suddainly thou proouest him.

6. Wherupon therfore can I hope, or wherin ought I to trust, but in the great mercie of God alone, and in the only hope of heauenlie grace? For whether I enioy the presence of good men, or deuout brethren, or faithful freinds, or holie books, or learned treatises, or sweet songs and hymns, al these help little, and haue little sauour, when grace forsaketh me, and I remaine left in my owne pouerty. At such a time there is no better remedy then patiẽce, and the resigning of my selfe vnto the wil of God.

7. I neuer found any so religious & deuout, that hath not had somtimes a withdrawing of grace, or felt not a decrease

creaſe of feruour. There was neuer Saint ſo highly rapt, and illuminated, who firſt or laſt was not tempted. For he is not worthy of the high contemplation of God, who hath not been exerciſed with ſome tribulation for God's ſake. For temptation going before, is wont to be a ſigne of enſuing comfort. And vnto thoſe that are proued by téptations, heauenly comfort is promiſed. He that shal ouercome, ſaith he, I wil giue him to eate of the wood of life.

8. But diuine comfort is giuen, that a man may be ſtronger to beare aduerſities. There followeth alſo temptation, leſt we ſhould wax proud of that good. The diuel ſleepeth not, neither is our flesh as yet dead. Therfore ceaſe not to prepare thy-ſelf to the battail: for on thy right hand, and on thy left are enemies that neuer reſt.

CHAP. X.

Of thankefulneſſe for the grace of God.

WHY ſeekeſt thou reſt, ſince thou art borne to labour? Diſpoſe thy-ſelfe to patience, rather then to comfort: and to the bearing of the Croſſe, rather then to gladnes. What ſecular perſon is there, that would not willingly receaue ſpiritual ioy and cõfort, if he could alwaies haue it? Spiritual comforts exceed al the delights of the world, and al the pleaſures of the flesh. Al worldly delights are either vaine, or vncleane: but ſpiritual delights are only pleaſant and honeſt, produced by vertues, and infuſed by God into pure harts. But no man can alwaies enioy theſe diuine comforts, according to his deſire: for the time of tempta-

tion is not long away.

2. False freedome of mind, and great trust of our selues, is very contrary to heauenlie visitations. God doth wel in giuing grace: but man doth euil in not returning it againe wholy vnto God, with thankes-giuing. And therefore the guifts of grace cannot flow in vs, because we are vngrateful to the giuer: & returne them not wholy to the head-fountaine. For grace is euer due to him that is thankeful: and from the proud shal be taken that which is wont to be giuen to the humble.

3. I desire not that consolation that taketh from me compunction: nor that contemplation which breedeth a haughty mind. For al that is high, is not holie; nor al that is sweet, good; nor euerie desire, pure; nor euerie thing that is deare vnto vs, is grateful to God. I doe willingly accept of that grace, wherby I may euer become more humble & feareful, and be made more ready

and able to forsake my-selfe. He that is taught by the guift of grace, and by the scourge of the withdrawing therof; wil not dare to attribute any good to himselfe: but wil rather acknowledge himselfe poore, and naked. Giue vnto God that which is Cod's, and ascribe vnto thy-selfe that which is thine owne; that is, giue thankes vnto God for his grace, and acknowledge that nothing is to be attributed to thee, but only sinne, and the punishment due therunto.

4. Content thy-selfe, and desire alwaies the meanest and lowest things, and the highest shal be giuen thee: for the highest stand not without the lowest. The highest Saints before God, are the least in their owne iudgements. And how much the more glorious, so much the humbler within themselues. Those that are ful of truth, and heauenly glory, are not desirous of the vaine glory of this world. Those

that are firmely setled and grounded in God, can no way be proud. And they that ascribe al vnto God, what good soeuer they haue receaued, seek not glory one of another: but would haue that glory which is from God alone: & desire aboue al things to praise God in himselfe, and in al the Saints, and alwaies tend vnto the same.

5. Be therfore grateful for the least guift, and thou shalt be made worthy to receaue greater. Let the least be vnto thee also as the greatest: and the most contemptible as an especial guift. If thou consider the worth of the giuer, no guist wil seeme little, or of meane esteeme. For it is not little that is giuen by the soueraigne Maiesty of God. Yea if he should giue punishment and stripes, it ought to be grateful; for that he doth, is alwaies for our saluation, whatsoeuer he permitteth to happen vnto vs. He that desireth to keep the grace of God, let

him be thankful for the grace giuen, and patient for the taking away therof. Let him pray that it may returne. Let him be wary and humble, leſt he leeſe it.

CHAP. XI.

How few the louers of the Croſſe of Chriſt are.

IESVS hath now manie louers of his heauenlie kingdome, but few bearers of his Croſſe. He hath manie deſirous of comfort, but few of tribulation. He findeth manie companions of his table, but few of his abſtinence. Al deſire to reioyce with him, few wil ſuffer anie thing for him, or with him. Manie follow Ieſus vnto the breaking of bread: but few to the drinking of the Chalice of his paſſion. Manie reuerence his miracles, few follow the ignominie

of his Crosse. Manie loue Iesus, as long as aduersities happen not. Manie praise and blesse him, as long as they receaue any comfort from him. But if Iesus hide himself, and leaue them but a while, they fal either into complaint, or into too much deiection of mind.

2. But they that loue Iesus for Iesus, and not for some comfort of their owne, blesse him in al tribulation & anguish of hart, as wel as in the greatest comfort. And although he should neuer giue them comfort, they notwithstanding would euer prayse him, and alwaies giue him thankes.

3. O how powerful is the pure loue of Iesus, which is mixed with no selfe-loue nor proper interest! Are they not al to be called hirelings, that euer seeke comforts? Doe they not shew themselues to be rather louers of themselues, then of Christ, that alwaies think of their commodity and gaine? Where may one be found that wil serue

God, without looking for reward?

4. It is hard to find any one so spiritual, that is free from the loue of al earthly things. For where is any that is indeed poore in spirit, and free from al affection of creatures? Far hence, & from the end of the world is his price. If a man should giue al his wealth, yet is it nothing. And if he should doe great pennance, yet is it little. And if he should attaine to al knowledge, he is yet far-off. And if he should haue great vertue, and very feruent deuotion yet, there is much wanting: to wit, one thing, which is most necessarie for him. What is that? That leauing al, he forsake himselfe, and goe perfectly from himselfe, and retaine nothing of selfe-loue. And when he hath done al that he knoweth to be done, let him thinke that he hath done nothing.

5. Let him not weigh that much which might be much esteemed, but according to truth, let him affirme

himselfe to be an vnprofitable seruant, as our Sauiour hath said: When you shal haue done al things that are commanded you, say: We are vnprofitable seruants. They may be truly poore in spirit and naked, and say with the Prophet: I am alone and poore: yet no man richer, no man more powerful, no man more free then he that can leaue himselfe and al things, and put himselfe in the meaneſt and loweſt place.

CHAP. XII.

Of the high way of the holy Crosse.

VNTO many seemeth hard this speach: Deny thy-selfe, take vp thy Crosse, and follow Iesus. But it wil be much harder to heare that last word: Get yee away from me, yee cur-

sed into euerlasting fire. For they that now willingly heare and follow the word of the Crosse, shal not then feare to heare the sentence of euerlasting damnation. This signe of the Crosse shal be in heauen, when our Lord shal come to iudgement. Then al the seruants of the Crosse, who in their life time cõformed themselues vnto Christ crucified, shal draw neer vnto our Lord with great confidence.

2. Why therefore feareſt thou to take vp the Crosse, which leadeth thee to a Kingdome. In the Crosse is health, in the Crosse is life, in the Crosse is protection against our enemies, in the Crosse is infusion of heauenlie sweetnes, in the Crosse is strength of mind, in the Crosse is ioy of spirit, in the Crosse is the height of vertue, in the Crosse is the perfection of sanctity. There is no health of the soule, nor hope of euerlasting life but in the Crosse. Take vp therfore thy Crosse &

follow Iesus, & thou shalt goe into life euerlasting. He is gone before, bearing his Crosse, and is dead for thee on the Crosse; that thou maiest also beare thy Crosse, and desire to die on the Crosse, with him. For if thou dyest with him, thou shalt also liue with him. And if thou be his companion in payne, thou shalt be partaker with him also in glory.

3. Behold in the Crosse al doth consist, and al lyeth in ending our life vpon it: for there is no other way vnto life, and vnto true inward peace, but the way of the Holy Crosse, and of daily mortification. Goe where thou wilt, seeke whatsoeuer thou wilt, thou shalt not find a higher way aboue, nor a safer way below, then the way of the holy Crosse. Dispose and order al things according to thy wil and iudgement: yet thou shalt euer find, that of necessity thou must suffer some-what, either willingly or against thy wil, so as thou shalt neuer fully

auoid the Croſſe. For either thou shalt feel payne in thy bodie, or in thy ſoule thou shalt ſuffer tribulation of ſpirit.

4. Somtimes thou shalt be forſaken of God, ſomtimes thou shalt be troubled by thy neighbours: and which is more, oftentimes thou shalt be irkſome to thy ſelfe: neither canſt thou be deliuered or eaſed by any remedy or comfort; but ſo long as pleaſeth God, thou oughteſt to beare it. For God wil haue thee learne to ſuffer tribulation without comfort; and that thou ſubmit thy-ſelfe wholy to him, and become more humble by tribulation. No man hath ſo liuely a feeling of the paſſion of Chriſt, as he who hath chanced to ſuffer the like. The Croſſe therfore is alwaies ready, and euerie where attendeth thee. Thou canſt not eſcape it, whitherſoeuer thou flyeſt: for wherſoeuer thou goeſt, thou carrieſt thy-ſelfe with thee, and

shalt euer find thy-ſelfe both aboue and below, without and within: which way ſoeuer thou doeſt turne thee, alwaies thou shalt find the Croſſe: and euerie where of neceſſity thou muſt haue patience, if thou wilt haue inward peace, and deſerue an euerlaſting Crowne.

5. Yf thou beare the Croſſe willingly, it wil beare thee, and lead thee to thy deſired end: to wit, where there shal be an end of ſuffering, though heer there shal not. If thou beare it vnwillingly, thou makeſt for thyſelfe a new burden and increaſeſt thy load, and yet notwithſtanding thou muſt beare it. If thou caſt away one Croſſe, without doubt thou shalt find another, and that perhaps a more heauy.

6. Thinkeſt thou to eſcape that which no man could euer auoyd? which of the Saints in the world was without Croſſes, and tribulations?

Verily Ieſus Chriſt our Lord was neuer one houre without paine of ſuffering, ſo long as he liued. Chriſt (ſaith he) ought to ſuffer, & riſe againe from death, and ſo to enter into his glorie: & how doeſt thou ſeek any other way, then this high way, which is the way of the holy Croſſe?

7. The whole life of Chriſt was a Croſſe and Martyrdome: and doeſt thou ſeek reſt and ioy? Thou art deceaued, thou art deceaued, if thou ſeekeſt any other thing, then to ſuffer tribulation: for this whole mortal life is ful of miſeries, and enuironed on euery ſide with Croſſes. And how much the more one hath profited in ſpirit, ſo much the heauier Croſſes he oftentimes findeth: for the loue he beareth to God increaſeth the griefe which he endureth for his banishment.

8. But yet this man, though ſo many wayes afflicted, is not without the remedy of ſpiritual conſolation,

for the great good which he perceaueth to grow vnto him by the bearing of his Crosse. For whilest he willingly putteth himselfe vnder it, al the burden of tribulation is turned into the confidence of diuine comfort. And how much the more the flesh is wasted by affliction, so much the more is the spirit strengthned by inward grace. And sometimes he is so comforted with the desire of tribulation, and aduersity, for the loue of conforming himselfe to the Crosse of Christ, that he would not wish at any time to be without sorrow and tribulation: because he belieueth, that so much the more grateful he shal be vnto God, how much the more he can suffer for him. This is not a worke of human vertue, but it is the grace of Christ, that can, and doth so much in frail flesh; that what naturally it alwaies abhorreth and flyeth, that by feruour of spirit, it taketh hold on and loueth.

9. It is not according to man's inclination to beare the Crosse, to loue the Crosse, chastice and subdue the body, to fly honours, to suffer contumelies with a ioyful hart, to despise himself, and to wish to be despised, to beare al aduersities, and domages, and to desire no prosperity in this world. If thou considereſt thy-selfe, thou shalt be able to performe no such matter thy-selfe. But if thou trusteſt in our Lord, strength shal be giuen thee from heauen, and the world and flesh shal be made subiect to thy command. Neither shal thou feare thy enemy the Diuel, if thou be armed with faith, and signed with the Crosse of Christ.

10. Resolue therfore with thy-selfe, like a good and faithful seruant of Christ, to beare manfully the Crosse of thy Lord, who was crucified for thy loue Prepare thy-selfe to beare many aduersities and diuers kinds of troubles in this miserable life:

life: for so it wil be with thee, wherſoeuer thou be: and ſo ſurely thou wilt find it, wherſoeuer thou hide thy-ſelfe. So it muſt be, and there is no remedy or meanes to auoid tribulation and ſorrow, but to beare them. Drinke of the chalice of our Lord willingly, if thou wilt be his freind, and deſireſt to haue part with him. Leaue the deſire of comforts to God: let him doe therin as ſhal beſt pleaſe him. Set thou thy hart vpon the ſuffering of tribulations, and account them the greateſt comforts: for that the paſſions of this life are not condigne to future glory, although thou alone couldeſt ſuffer them al.

11. When thou ſhalt come to this eſtate, that tribulatiõ ſhal ſeeme ſweet, and pleaſant vnto thee for Chriſt: then thou maiſt thinke it is wel with thee, for thou haſt found a Paradiſe vpon earth. As long as it is grieuous vnto thee to ſuffer, and that thou deſireſt to fly it, ſo long ſhalt thou be ill at eaſe: &

the tribulation thou flyeſt wil follow thee euery-where.

12. If thou ſetleſt thy-ſelfe to that thou oughteſt, to wit, to ſuffer, and to die to thy ſelfe, it wil quickly be better with thee, and thou ſhalt find peace. Although thou ſhouldeſt haue been rapt euen vnto the third heauen with S. Paul, thou art not for this aſſured, that thou ſhalt ſuffer no contradiction. I (ſaith Ieſus) wil ſhew him how great things he muſt ſuffer for my name. It reſteth therfore, that thou ſuffer, if thou wilt loue Ieſus, and perpetually ſerue him.

13. O, would to God, thou wert worthy to ſuffer ſomthing for Ieſus! how great glory would it be vnto thee, what ioy to al the Saints of God, how great edification alſo to thy neighbour! For al doe commend patience, though few deſire to ſuffer. With great reaſon thou oughteſt to be willing to ſuffer a little for Chriſt; ſince many

ſuffer farre greater things for the loue of the world.

14. Know for certaine that thou oughteſt to lead a dying life. And how much the more euery one dieth to himſelfe; ſo much the more doth he begin to liue to God. No man is fit to attaine vnto heauenly things, vnleſſe he ſubmit himſelfe to the bearing of aduerſities for Chriſt. Nothing is more grateful vnto God, nothing more wholeſome to thee in this world, then to ſuffer willingly for Chriſt. And if it were in thy choice, thou ſhouldeſt rather wish to ſuffer aduerſities for Chriſt, then to enioy the delight of many comforts: becauſe by theſe meanes thou ſhouldeſt be more like vnto Chriſt, and more comformable to al the Saints. For our merit, and the perfection of our eſtate conſiſteth not in much ſweetnes and comforts; but rather in ſuffering great afflictions and tribulations.

15. If there had been any better thing, & more profitable to the health of man then suffering, surely Christ would haue shewed it by word, and example. But he plainly exhorted al the Disciples that followed him, and al that desire to follow him, to the bearing of the Crosse, and saith: If any man wil come after me, let him deny himselfe and take vp his Crosse, and follow me. So as when we haue read & searched al, let this be the last conclusion: That by many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdome of God.

The end of the second Booke.

OF THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST.

THE THIRD BOOK.

CHAP. I.

Of the inward speach of Christ vnto a faithful soule.



Wil heare what our Lord God wil speak in me. Blessed is the soule that heareth our Lord speaking in her, & receaueth from his mouth the word of comfort. Blessed are those

eares that receaue the ſound of the diuine voice, & liſten not to the whilſperings of the world. Bleſſed indeed are thoſe eares that harken not to the voice which ſoundeth outwardly, but vnto truth which teacheth inwardly. Bleſſed are the eies that being shut-vp to outward things, are attentiue to thoſe things that are internal. Bleſſed are they that enter into the inward things, and endeauour to prepare themſelues more and more by daily exerciſes to the attayning of heauenly ſecrets. Bleſſed be they that delight to attend to the ſeruice of God, and caſt from them al impedimentes of the world.

2. Conſider theſe things, my ſoule, and shut-vp the dore of thy ſenſual deſires: that thou maiſt heare what thy Lord God ſpeakes in thee. Thus ſaith thy Beloued: I am thy ſafety, thy peace, & thy life. Keep thy ſelfe with me, and thou shalt find peace. Forſake

al transitory things and seeke those that be euerlasting. What are temporal things, but deceauing snares? and what doe al creatures auail thee, if thou be forsaken by the Creatour? Forsake therefore al earthly things and labour to please thy Creatour, and be faithful vnto him, that thou maist attaine vnto true happines.

CHAP. II.

That truth speaketh inwardly without noyse of words.

SPeak Lord, for thy seruant heareth. I am thy seruant, grant me vnderstanding, that I may know thy testimonies. Stir vp my hart to heare the words of thy mouth. Let thy speach descend as the dew into my soule. The children of Israel in times past sayd vnto Moyses? Speak thou vnto vs,

and we shal heare thee: Let not our Lord speak vnto vs, lest perhaps we dye. Not so Lord, not so, I beseech thee. But rather with the Prophet Samuel, I humbly and earnestly intreat: Speak Lord, for thy seruant heareth. Let not Moyses speak vnto me, nor any of the Prophets, but thou rather speak, my Lord God, the inspirer, & enlightner of al the Prophets: for thou alone without them canst perfectly instruct me, but they without thee can profit nothing.

2. They can pronounce words, but they giue not spirit. They speak maruelous wel, but if thou hold thy peace, they inflame not the hart. They deliuer the letters, but thou openest the sense. They bring-forth mysteries, but thou discloses the vnderstanding of sealed things. They declare thy commandements, but thou helpest to fulfil them. They shew the way, but thou giuest strength to walke in it. They

worke only exteriourly, but thou instructest & enlightnest the harts. They water outwardly, but thou giuest fruitfulnes. They sound forth words, but thou giuest vnderstanding to the hearing.

3. Let not therfore Moyses speak vnto me, but thou my Lord God, the euerlasting truth; lest perhaps I should dye, and become without fruit, if I be warmed outwardly only and not inflamed within: lest the word heard and not fulfilled, knowen and not loued, belieued and not obserued, should increase my iudgement. Speak therfore Lord, for thy seruant heareth, for thou hast the words of euerlasting life. Speak vnto me to the comfort of my soule and to the amendment of my whole life, and to thy praise and glory, and euerlasting honour.

CHAP. III.

That the words of God are to be heard with humility, and that many weigh them not.

SOnne heare my words, words of great comfort, excelling al the knowledge of the Philosophers & wise men of this world. My words are spirit and life, not to be weighed by the vnderstanding of man. They are not to be drawn to vaine liking, but to be heard with silence, and to be receaued with al humility and great affection. And I said: Blessed is the man whom thou shalt instruct, O Lord, and shalt teach thy law, that thou maist giue him quietnes from euil daies, and that he be not destroyed vpon earth.

2. I (saith our Lord) haue taught the Prophets from the beginning, and

ceaſe not cõtinually to ſpeake to euery one: but many are deafe, and giue no eare to my ſpeach. The greater number doe more willingly liſten to the world, then to God: and follow ſooner the deſires of their flesh, then the wil of God. The world promiſeth temporal and ſmal things, and is ſerued with great diligence: I promiſe moſt high and eternal things, and the harts of men are nothing moued with it. Who is he that ſerueth and obeyeth me with equal care to that with which the world, & the Lords therof are ſerued? Blush Sidon, ſaith the ſea. And if thou aske the cauſe, heare wherefore: For a little Prebend a long iorney is vndertaken; for euerlaſting life many wil ſcarce once lift a foot from the ground. A thing of ſmal value is ſought after greedily: for a penny ſomtimes there is great contention: for a vaine thing and fleight promiſe, men ceaſe not to toile day and night.

3. But (alas) for an vnchangeable good, for an ineſtimable reward, for the higheſt honour and glory without end, they are loath to take the leaſt paines. Blush therefore ſlouthful and complaining ſeruant, that they are found more ready to diſtruction, then thou to life. They reioyce more at vanity, then thou at truth. And yet they are ſomtimes fruſtrated of their hope: but my promiſe deceaueth none, nor ſendeth him away empty that truſteth in me. I wil giue that which I haue promiſed. I wil fulfil that which I haue ſaid, but to him that remaines faithful in my loue to the end, I am the reward of al good, and doe try my deuout ſeruants in forcible proofs.

4. Write my words in thy hart, and thinke diligently of them: for they wil be neceſſary in time of tẽptation. What thou vnderſtandeſt not when thou readeſt, thou ſhalt know in the day of viſitation. I am wont to viſit my elect

two seueral waies, to wit, with temptation, and comfort. And I dayly read two lessons vnto them, one reprehending their vices, another exhorting them to the increase of vertues. He that hath my words & despiseth them, hath within himselfe that shal iudge him at the iast day.

A Prayer to implore the grace of deuotion.

5. O, Lord my God, thou art al that I can desire. Who am I, that dare speak vnto thee? I am thy poorest seruant, and a most vile worme: much more poore and contemptible then I can or dare expresse. Remember Lord, that I am nothing, haue nothing, and can doe nothing. Thou alone art good, iust, and holy; thou canst doe al things, performest al things, leauing only a sinner void of al good. Cal to mind thy mercies, and fil my hart with thy

grace, who wilt not that thy workes be void.

6. How can I ſupport my ſelfe in this miſerable life, vnleſſe thy mercy and grace comfort me? Turne not thy face from me: delay not thy viſitation; draw not away thy comfort, leſt my ſoule become as earth without water vnto thee. Lord teach me to fulfil thy wil; teach me to liue worthily and humbly in thy ſight; for thou art my wiſdome, thou doſt perfectly know me, and dideſt know me before the world was made, and before I was borne into the world.

CHAP. IV.

That we ought to liue in truth & humility in the ſight of God.

SOnne, walke in my ſight in ſincerity and truth; and euer ſeek me in

plainneſſe of hart. He that walketh in my ſight in truth, shal be defended from euil incurſions, and truth shal deliuer him from ſeducers, and from the detractions of the wicked. If truth shal haue deliuered thee, thou shalt be truly free, and shalt not care for vaine ſpeaches of men. Lord, it is true. According as thou ſaiſt, ſo I beſeech thee let it be done with me, and keep me, and bring me to a happy end. Let thy truth teach me, and let it deliuer me from al euil affection & inordinate loue: & I shal walke with thee in great freedome of hart.

2. I wil teach thee (ſaith the Truth) thoſe things that are right and pleaſing in my ſight. Thinke of thy ſinnes with great ſorrow, and griefe, and neuer eſteem thy-ſelfe any thing for thy good works. Thou art in very deed a ſinner, and ſubiect to many paſſions. Of thy-ſelfe thou alwaies tendeſt to nothing, and art quickly caſt-downe and

ouercome: quickly troubled, quickly dissolued. Thou hast nothing wherin thou canst glory, but many things for which thou oughtest to humble, and despise thy-selfe: for thou art much weaker then thou art able to comprehend.

3. And therefore let nothing seem much vnto thee whatsoeuer thou doest. Let nothing seem great, nothing precious, and wonderful, nothing worthy of estimation: nothing high, nothing truly commendable, and to be desired, but that which is euerlasting. Let the eternal Truth aboue al things please thee. Let thy own great vnworthines alwaies displease thee. Feare nothing, blame, and fly nothing so much as thy sinnes, and vices: which ought to displease more then the losse of any thing whatsoeuer. Some walk not sincerly in my sight, but led by a certaine curiosity, and pride, wil know my secrets, and vnderstand

the

the high mysteries of God, neglecting themselues and their own saluation. These oftentimes (for that I resist thē) doe fal into great temptation & sinnes, for their pride and curiosity.

4. Feare the iudgements of God, dread the wrath of the Almighty. But discusse not the works of the Highest. Search thine owne iniquities, in how much thou hast offended, and how much good thou hast neglected. Some carry their deuotion only in books, some in pictures, some in outward signes and figures, some haue me in their mouths, but little in their harts. There are others that being illuminated in their vnderstanding, and purged in their affection, doe alwaies aspire with an earnest mind to euerlasting happines: and are vnwilling to heare of the things of this world, and doe serue the necessities of nature with griefe: and these perceaue what the Spirit of truth speaketh in them. Because

it teacheth them to despise earthly, and loue heauenly things: to neglect the world, and day and night to desire heauen.

CHAP. V.

Of the wonderful effect of diuine grace.

I Praise thee, O heauenly Father, Father of my Lord Iesus Christ, for that thou hast vouchsafed to remember me a poore and wretched creature. O Father of mercies and God of al comfort, thanks be vnto thee, who somtimes with thy comfort refreshest me vnworthy of al comfort. I euer blesse and glorify thee with thy only begotten Sonne, and the holy Ghost for al worlds. O God my Lord, the holy louer of my soule, when thou shalt come into my hart, al that is within me wil re-

ioyce. Thou art my glorie and the exultation of my hart. Thou art my hope, and my refuge in the day of my tribulation.

2. But, for that I am yet weake in loue, and imperfect in vertue, I haue need to be comforted by thee: visit me therefore often, and instruct me with thy holy discipline. Deliuer me from euil passions, and heale my hart of al inordinate affections: that being cured within and wel purged, I may be made fit to loue, strong to suffer, and constant to persеuer.

3. Loue is a great matter, in very truth a great good? which alone maketh euery thing that is heauy, light; and beareth equally vnequal burdens. For it carrieth a burden without a burden, and maketh euery thing that is bitter, sweet and delightsome. The noble loue of Iesus inforceth man to worke great things, and stirreth him vp to desire alwaies the most

perfect. Loue wil be aloft, and not kept downe with any base thing. Loue wil be free from al worldly affection, to the end his inward sight be not obscured, that he be not intangled with the desire of any transitory gaine, or troubled with the want therof. Nothing is sweeter then loue, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing more ample, nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller nor better in heauen or in earth: for that loue hath his beginning from God, and cannot rest but in God aboue al creatures.

4. He that loueth, flyeth, runneth, and reioyceth; he is free & not held-in. He giueth al for al, and hath al in al, for that he resteth in one Highest aboue al, from which al good floweth and proceedeth. He respecteth not the guifts, but turneth himselfe aboue al goods vnto the giuer. Loue oftentimes knoweth no measure, but inflameth aboue al measure. Loue feeleth no burden,

waigheth no paines, desireth aboue it strength, complaineth not of impossibility, for that it thinketh al things lawful and possible. It is therefore able to vndertake al things, and performeth and bringeth many things to effect: wheras he that doth not loue, fainteth, and can doe nothing.

5. Loue alwaies watcheth, and sleeping sleepeth not; being wearied is not tyred; straitned, is not pressed; frighted, is not troubled: but like a liuely flame and burning torch, breaketh vpwards, and passeth through al with great security. If any one loueth, he knoweth what this voice crieth. A lowd cry in the eares of God, is the burning loue of the soule, which saith: My God, my loue, thou art wholy mine, & I wholy thine.

6. Enlarge me in loue, that my hart may tast how sweet it is to loue, and to be dissolued, and swimme in thy loue. Let me be possessed by loue, mounting aboue my-selfe, with excessiue feruour,

and admiration. Let me ſing the ſong of loue, let me follow thee on high my beloued, let my ſoule faint in thy praiſe reioycing with loue. Let me loue thee more then my ſelfe, and not my ſelfe but for thee, and al in thee that truly loue thee, as the law of loue commandeth which ſhineth in thee.

7. Loue is ſwift, ſincere, pious, ſweet and delightful, ſtrong, patient, faithful, prudent, ſuffering, ful of courage, and neuer ſeeking it-ſelfe. For where one ſeeketh himſelf, there he falleth from loue. Loue is circumſpect, humble, and vpright: not remiſſe, not mutable, nor attending vnto vaine things; ſober, chaſt, conſtant, quiet, and guarded in al the ſenſes. Loue is ſubiect, and obedient to Superiours, meane and abiect to itſelfe, deuout and thankeful vnto God, truſting and hoping alwaies in him, euen then when God imparteth no ſweetnes vnto it: for without ſorrow none liueth in loue.

8. He that is not ready to ſuffer all things, and ſtand to the wil of his beloued, is not worthy to be called a louer. A louer ought to embrace willingly al that is hard and diſtaſtful for his beloued; and not to turne away from him, for any contrary accidents.

CHAP. VI.

Of the proofe of a true Louer.

SOnne, thou art not yet a ſtrong and prudent louer. Wherfore Lord? Becauſe thou giueſt ouer for a ſmal aduerſity, and too earneſtly ſeekeſt comfort. A conſtant louer ſtandeth firmely in temptations, and giueth not credit to the crafty perſuaſions of the enemy. As I pleaſe him in proſperity, ſo I am not vnpleaſant to him in aduerſity.

2. A prudent louer conſidereth not ſo much the guift of his louer, as the loue

of the giuer. He rather eſteemeth the good wil, then the value, and placeth al guifts vnder his beloued. A noble louer reſteth not in the guift, but in me aboue any guift. Al therefore is not loſt if ſomtimes thou haſt leſſe taſt of me and my Saints, then thou wouldeſt. That good and ſweet deſire which thou ſomtimes feeleſt, is the effect of preſent grace, & a certaine taſt of the heauenly Country: wheron thou muſt not rely too much, for it goeth and commeth. But to fight againſt euil motions of the mind which may happen vnto thee, and to deſpiſe the ſuggeſtion of the diuel, is a ſigne of vertue and great merit.

3. Let not therfore ſtrange fancies forced into thee, of any matter whatſoeuer, trouble thee. Retaine a firme purpoſe and an vpright intention to God. Neither is it an illuſion that ſomtimes thou art ſuddainly rapt on high, and preſently returneſt againe vnto the

accuſtomed vanities of thy hart. For thou doſt rather vnwillingly ſuffer them, then commit them: and as long as they diſpleaſe thee, and thou ſtriueſt againſt them, it is a merit, and no loſſe.

4. Know that thy ancient enemy doth euer ſtriue to hinder thy deſire to good; and to diuert thee formal deuout exerciſe: to wit, from the worshiping of Saints, from the deuout memory of my paſſion, from the profitable remembrance of thy ſinnes, from the guard of thine own hart, and from the firme purpoſe of profiting in vertue. He thruſteth many euil thoughts into thy mind, that he may cauſe a wearisomnes, and horrour in thee, to draw thee from deuout prayer and reading. Humble confeſſion is diſpleaſing vnto him, and if he could, he would cauſe thee to ceaſe from receauing the Sacrament of my Body. Truſt him not, nor care for him, although he should often ſet ſnares of deceit to intrap thee.

Charge him with it, when he ſuggeſteth euil and vncleane thoughts vnto thee. Say vnto him: Auant filthy ſpirit, blush miſerable wretch; thou art filthy that bringeſt ſuch things vnto myne eares. Away from me wicked deceauer, thou shalt haue no part in me: but Ieſus shal be with me as a ſtrong warriour, and thou shalt remayne confounded. I had rather dye, and vndergoe any torment, then to conſent vnto thee. Hold thy peace & be ſilent; I wil heare thee no more, though thou shouldeſt worke me many troubles. My Lord is my light and ſaluation, whom shal I feare? If whole armies should ſtand togeather againſt me, my hart shal not feare. Our Lord is my helper and my Redeemer.

5. Fight like a good ſouldiar: and if thou ſometimes fal through frailty, recouer greater forces then before, truſting in my more aboundant grace: and take great heed of vaine pleaſing

of thy ſelfe, & pride. This brings many into errour, & makes them ſometimes fal into almoſt incurable blindnes. Let the fal of the proud foolishly preſuming of thẽſelues, ſerue thee for a warning, and a perpetual humiliation.

CHAP. VII.

That grace is to be hid vnder the veyle of humility.

SOnne, it is more profitable, and ſafe for thee to hide the grace of deuotion, nor to extol thy-ſelfe, nor to ſpeake much, nor to eſteem much therof: but rather to deſpiſe thy-ſelfe, and feare it, as giuen to one vnworthy therof. This affection is not to be cleaued vnto, which may be quickly changed into the contrary. Thinke when thou art in grace, how miſerable and needy thou art wont to be without.

Neither doth therin only consist the profit of spiritual life, when thou hast the grace of comfort; but when thou humbly, resignedly, and patiently sufferest the withdrawing therof: so that thou be not then lesse diligent in the exercise of prayer, nor suffer thy selfe to passe ouer the rest of thy accustomed good works: but that thou willingly performe what lieth in thee, according as thou art able and vnderstandest to be fit: not neglecting thy-self wholy for the drinesse and trouble of mind, which thou feelest.

2. There are many that when it succeedeth not wel with them, presently they become impatient or shouthful. The way of man is not alwaies in his power, but it belongeth to God, to giue, and to comfort when he wil, how much he wil, and whom he wil, as it shal please him and no more. Some vnaduised persons haue ouerthrowne themselues for the greedy desire which

they had of the grace of deuotion: attempting more then they were able to performe, not waighing the measure of their weaknes, but following rather the desire of their hart, then the iudgement of reason. And because they presumed on greater matters then was pleasing to God, they quickly lost his grace. They were made needy, and left in a deiected estate that built themselues nests in heauen: to the end that being humbled, and impouerished, they may learne not to fly with their own wings, but to liue in hope vnder my fethers. They that are yet new, and vnacquainted in the way of our Lord, vnles they gouerne themselues by the counsaile of discreet persons, may easily be deceaued and ouerthrowne.

3. And if they wil rather follow their owne iudgement, then giue credit to others that are experienced, their end wil be dangerous, if they cannot be

drawne from their owne conceit. Seldome those that are wise in their owne opinion, suffer themselues humbly to be gouerned by others. A little knowledge with humility, and a slender vnderstanding, is better then great treasures of learning with a vaine selfe-liking. It is better for thee to haue lesse, then much of that wherof thou maist be proud. He doth not discreetly, that wholy giueth himselfe ouer to mirth, forgetting his former pouerty, & the chast feare of God, which feareth to loose the grace which he hath obteined. Neither is he vertuously wise, that in time of aduersity or any tribulation whatsoeuer, yealdeth to despairing thoughts, & thinketh and imagineth of me lesse confidently then he ought.

4. He that wil be ouer-secure in time of peace, shal be often found in time of warre too deiected and fearful. If thou couldest alwaies continue humble, and lowly within thy-selfe, and

temper, and gouerne thy ſoule wel, thou shouldeſt not ſo ſoone fal into danger and offence. It is good counſel, that when thou conceaueſt feruour of ſpirit, thou shouldeſt thinke what wil become of thee, when that light shal leaue thee. And when that doth happen, remember the light may returne againe, which for thy inſtruction and my glory I haue withdrwne for a time.

5. Such proofe is often more profitable, then if thou shouldeſt alwaies enioy proſperity according to thy deſire. For merits are not to be waighed in a man by the number of viſions and comforts which he hath, or by his knowledge in Scriptures, or by his being placed in high degree, but in that he is grounded in true humility, and replenished with diuine charity: if he alwaies purely and entirely ſeeke the honour of God, if he eſteem himſelfe nothing, and with a ſincere hart deſpiſe himſelfe, & reioyce more to be

despised and humbled by others, then to be honoured.

CHAP. VIII.

Of a meane conceit of our-selues, in the sigght of God.

SHal I speak vnto my Lord, sith I am dust and ashes? If I esteem better of my-selfe, behold thou standest against me, & my iniquities beare true witnes: neither can I speake against it. But if I abase, and esteeme nothing of my-selfe, and cast off al selfe-conceit, and (as I am) account my-selfe to be dust, thy grace wil be fauourable vnto me, and thy light wil be neer vnto my hart: and al estimation how litle soeuer shal be swallowed vp in the depth of my nothing, and perish euerlastingly. There thou shewest my-selfe vnto me, what I am, what

what I haue been, and whither I am come: for alas I am nothing, and I knew it not. And if I be left to my selfe, behold I become nothing, and a masse of infirmity. But if thou suddainly looke vpon me, I am presently made strong, and filled with new ioy. And it is a great meruaile, that I am so suddainly lifted vp, and so graciously imbraced by thee, that of mine owne waight, alwaies sinke downward.

2. Thy loue is cause heerof, freely preuenting me, and releeuing me in so manie necessities, preseruing me also from grieuous dangers, and (as I may truely say) deliuering me from innumerable euils. For surely by euil louing my-selfe, I lost my-selfe: and by seeking thee alone, & sincerely louing thee, I haue found both my-selfe and thee, and for thy loue haue more deeply brought my-selfe to nothing. For that thou, O most sweet Iesu, dealest with me aboue al desert, and aboue al

that I dare hope and requeſt.

3. Bleſſed be thou my God; for although I be vnworthy of al good yet the noblenes of thy bounty and thy infinit goodnes, neuer ceaſeth to doe good euen to the vngrateful, and to them that be turned away farre from thee. Turne vs vnto thee, O Lord, that we may be grateful, humble, and deuout: for thou art our ſafety, our power, and our ſtrength.

CHAP. IX.

That al things are to be referred vnto God, as vnto the laſt end.

SONNE, I ought to be thy chiefeſt and laſt end, if thou deſire to be truly bleſſed. With this intention thy affection shal be purified which is oftentimes inclined inordinatly to itſelfe, and vnto creatures. For if in any

thing thou seek thy-selfe, thou presently fainteſt, and drieſt vp within thy-self. Direct therfore al things chiefly vnto me, for I am he that haue giuen al. Conſider euery thing as flowing from the higheſt good; and therfore al things are to be reduced vnto me as vnto their firſt beginning.

2. Out of me, as out of liuing fountaines, the little and the great, the poore and the rich, doe draw the water of life: and they that willingly, and freely ſerue me, shal receaue grace for grace. But he that wil glory out of me, or be delighted in any particular good, shal not be grounded in true ioy, nor enlarged in his hart, but shal be many waies hindred and ſtraitned. Thou oughteſt therfore to aſcribe no good vnto thy-ſelfe, nor attribute the praiſe of vertue vnto any man: but giue al vnto God, without whome man hath nothing. I haue beſtowed al, and wil that al be returned to me againe:

and with great ſeuerity I require thanks.

3. This is the truth that putteth to flight vaine glorie. And if heauenly grace, and true charity enter in, there shal be no enuy nor grudging of hart, neither shal there be any place for ſelfe-loue. For diuine charitie ouercommeth al, and enlargeth al the forces of the ſoule. If thou vnderſtand aright, in me alone thou wilt reioyce, in me alone thou wilt hope: for none is good, but God alone, who is to be praiſed aboue al things, and to be bleſſed in al.

CHAP. X.

That deſpiſing the world, it is ſweet to ſerue God.

NOw I wil ſpeake againe, ô Lord, and wil not be ſilent. I wil ſay in

the eares of my God, my Lord, and my King that is on high: O how great is the multitude of thy ſweetnes, ô Lord, which thou haſt hidden for thoſe that feare thee! But what art thou to them that loue thee? What to them that ſerue thee with their whole hart? Truely vnſpeakable is the ſweetnes of thy contemplation, which thou beſtoweſt on them that loue thee. In this chiefly thou haſt shewed me the ſweetnes of thy charity, for that when I was not thou madeſt me: & when I went aſtray far-off from thee, thou broughteſt me back againe, that I might ſerue thee: and haſt commanded me to loue thee.

2. O fountaine of euerlaſting loue, what shal I ſay of thee? How can I forget thee, that haſt vouchſafed to remember me, euen when I withered away and perished! Thou haſt vſed mercy with thy ſeruant beyond al the expectation of my hart: and haſt beſtowed thy grace and freindship

beyond al merit. What shal I returne vnto thee for this grace? For it is not granted to euerie one to forsake al things, to renounce the world, and to vndertake a life of religion and perfection. Is it much that I serue thee, whome al creatures are bound to serue? It ought not to seeme much vnto me to serue thee: but this rather seemeth much, and meruailous vnto me, that thou vouchsafest to receaue into thy seruice one so poore and vnworthy, and to ioyne him with thy beloued seruants.

3. Behold al is thine which I haue, and wherby I serue thee. And yet in very deed thou rather seruest me then I thee. Behold heauen and earth, which thou hast created for the seruice of man are ready at hand, and doe daily performe whatsoeuer thou dost command; and this is little: yea thou hast also appointed the Angels to the seruice of man. But that which excelleth

al, is, that thou thy-ſelfe haſt vouchſafed to ſerue man, and promiſed to giue thy-ſelfe vnto him.

4. What shal I giue thee for al theſe thouſands of benefits? I would I could ſerue thee al the dayes of my life! I would I were able at leaſt for one day, to doe thee ſome worthy & acceptable ſeruice! Thou art truly worthy of al ſeruice, of al honour and euerlaſting praiſe. Thou art my Lord, and I thy poore ſeruant, that am bound to ſerue thee with al my forces, neither ought I euer to ceaſe to praiſe thee. And this I wish to doe, this I deſire: and whatſoeuer is wanting vnto me, vouchſafe I beſeech the to ſupply.

5. It is a great honour, a very great glorie to ſerue thee, and deſpiſe al things for thee. For great grace shal be giuen to them that shal willingly ſubiect themſelues vnto thy moſt holy ſeruice. They shal receaue moſt ſweet comfort of the holy-Ghoſt, that for thy

loue shal renounce al carnal delights. They shal attaine great freedome of mind, that for thy names sake shal enter into the narrow way, and shal haue left off al care of this world.

6. O sweet and delightful seruitude of God, by which man is truly made free and holy! O sacred state of religious bondage, which maketh man equal to Angels, pleasing to God, terrible to diuels, and grateful, and of great esteeme to al the faithful! O seruice to be imbraced, & alwaies wished for, by which we obtaine the greatest good, and attaine to that ioy which neuer shal haue end.

CHAP. XI.

That the desires of our hart are to be examined and moderated.

SONNE, thou oughtest tō learne many things more, which thou hast not yet wel learned. What are those Lord? That thou frame thy desires wholy according to my pleasure: and be not a louer of thy-selfe, but a diligent follower of my wil. Thy desires oftentimes doe stir thee vp, and driue thee forwards with violence: but consider whether thou art moued rather for my honour, then for thine owne profit. If I be the cause, thou wilt be wel content with whatsoeuer I shal ordaine: but if there lurke in thee any selfe-inclination, behold this is it that hindreth thee, and waigheth thee downe.

2. Beware therfore thou incline not too much vpon any desire that commeth to thy mind, before thou aske my counsaile: lest perhaps afterwards it repent thee, and that thou begin now to dislike that which before did please thee, and which thou earnestly desirest as the best. For euery affection that seemeth good, is not presently to be followed: nor euery contrarie affection at the first to be fled. It is expedient sometimes to vse a restraint euen in good desires and endeauours, lest by importunity thou incurre distraction of mind, and by euil example become a scandal vnto others: or being gainsaid by others, thou be suddainly troubled and fal.

3. Yet sometimes thou oughtest to vse violence, and resist manfully thy sensual appetites, and respect not what thy body would, or would not: but rather to labour, that euen perforce it be subiect to the spirit. And it is to be

chastised so long, and to be forced vnder seruitude, vntil it readily obey in al things, and learne to be content with a litle, and to be pleased with ordinary things, and not to murmur against any inconuenience.

CHAP. XII.

Of the effect of Patience, and of strife against Concupiscence.

LORD God, I perceaue patience is very necessary vnto me: for that many aduersities doe happen in this life. Howsoeuer I shal dispose of my peace, my life cannot be without warre and affliction. So it is Sonne. And my wil is not, that thou seek after that peace which is voyd of temptation, or that which feeleth no contrariety; but then think e that thou hast found peace, when thou art exercised with sundry

tribulations, and tried in many aduerſities.

2. If thou ſay that thou art not able to ſuffer much, how then wilt thou endure the fire of Purgatorie? Of two euils the leſſe is alwaies to be choſen. That thou maiſt therfore auoid euerlaſting punishments in the next world, endeauour to ſuffer patiently for God the preſent euils of this. Doeſt thou thinke that men of this world ſuffer little or nothing? Thou art deceaued. Look into the life euen of them that liue in greateſt delicacies, & thou shalt find it otherwiſe. But thou wilt ſay, they haue many delights, and follow their own wils, and therfore they make ſmal account of their tribulations. Be it ſo, that they haue whatſoeuer they wil; but how long doſt thou thinke it wil laſt.

3. Behold the wealthy of this world vanish away like ſmoke, and there shal be no memorie of their ioyes

paſt. Yea euen while they liue alſo, they reſt not in them without griefe, irkſomneſſe, and feare. For the ſelfe-ſame thing in which they take their delight, is oftentimes the cauſe of ſorrow vnto them and much affliction. They haue their deſert, who for that they immoderately ſeeke and follow delights, they doe not obtaine them, but with ſhame and ſorrow.

4. O how short and deceitful, how inordinate, and filthy are thoſe pleaſures! Yea ſo ſenſeles and blind are men that they vnderſtand it not: but like dumbe beaſts, for a little pleaſure of a corruptible life, they incurre the eternal death of their ſoule. Doe not thou therfore, my Sonne, follow the diſordinate inclinations of thy corrupt nature, but forſake thine owne wil. Delight in our Lord, and he wil giue thee the deſires of thy hart.

5. If thou deſire true delight, and to be more plentifully comforted by

me: behold, in the contempt of al wordly things, and in the cutting-off al baſe delights, shal be thy bleſſings, and aboundant comforts shal be giuen thee. And how much the more thou withdraweſt thy-ſelfe from al comfort of creatures, ſo much the ſweeter & more forcible conſolations shalt thou find in me. But at firſt thou canſt not attaine vnto them without a certaine griefe, labour, and ſtrife. The old cuſtome wil make reſiſtance, and thou muſt ouercome it with another cuſtome that is better. Thy flesh wil murmur: but thou muſt bridle it with feruour of ſpirit. The old ſerpent wil ſting and trouble thee: but by prayer he shal be put to flight: and with profitable labour thou shalt shut the dore againſt him.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the humble obedience of a ſubiect, according to the example of Chriſt.

SONNE, he that endeauoureth to withdraw himſelfe from obedience, withdraweth himſelfe from grace. And he that ſeeketh to haue things in priuate, ſhal looſe the common. He that doth not willingly & freely ſubmit himſelfe to his Superiour, it is a ſigne that his flesh is not yet perfectly obedient vnto him, but oftentimes rebelleth, and murmureth againſt him. Learne therfore readily to ſubmit thy-ſelfe to thy Superiour, if thou deſireſt to ſubdue thine owne paſſions. For the outward enemy is ſooner ouercome, if the inward man be in good eſtate. There is no worſe enemy,

nor more troubleſome to the ſoule, then thou vnto thy-ſelfe, not agreeing wel with the ſpirit. Thou muſt of neceſſity haue a true contempt of thy-ſelfe, if thou wilt preuaile againſt flesh and bloud.

2. Becauſe thou loueſt thy-ſelfe as yet too inordinately, therfore thou art afraid to reſigne thy-ſelfe wholy to the wil of others. But what great matter is it, if thou that art duſt, and nothing, ſubmit thy-ſelfe to a man for God: when I the Almighty and higheſt Soueraigne, who created al things of nothing, humbly ſubmitted my-ſelfe vnto man for thee? I became the moſt humble and abiect of al men, that thou mighteſt ouercome thy pride with my humilitie. Learne to obey thou that art duſt. Learne to humble thy-ſelfe thou earth and clay, and put thy-ſelfe vnder the feet of al men. Learne to breake thine owne wil, and to yeald thy ſelfe to al ſubiection.

3.

3. Take courage againſt thy-ſelfe, and ſuffer not pride to liue in thee: but humble and ſubmit thy-ſelfe to al, that euerie one may goe ouer thee, and tread thee as durt of the ſtreets vnder their feet. Vaine man, what canſt thou complaine of? what canſt thou anſwer, foule ſinner, to them that reprooue thee, who haſt ſo often offended God, and ſo many times deſerued hel? But mine eye hath ſpared thee, becauſe thy ſoule was pretious in my ſight: that thou mighteſt know my loue, and alwaies remaine grateful for my benefits: that thou mighteſt continually giue thy-ſelfe to true ſubiection and humilitie, and mighteſt beare patiently the contempt of thy-ſelfe.

CHAP. XIIII.

Of the ſecret Iudgements of God to be conſidered, leſt we be extolled in our good deeds.

THOV thundreſt thy iudgements ouer me, ô Lord, and shakeſt al my bones with feare and trembling: my ſoule is ſore afraid. I ſtand aſtonished, when I conſider that the heauens are not pure in thy ſight. If thou haſt found wickednes in Angels, and haſt not pardoned them, what shal become of me? Starres fel from heauen, and what doe I preſume that am duſt? They whoſe workes ſeemed laudable, fel into the loweſt hel: and I haue ſeen them, that did eate bread of Angels, to be delighted with the huskes of ſwyne.

1. There is no ſanctity, if thou, ô

Lord, withdraweſt thy hand. No wiſdome auaileth, if thou ceaſeſt to gouerne. No ſtrengeth helpeth, if thou leaueſt to defend. No chaſtity ſecure, if thou doeſt not protect it. No cuſtody of our owne profitable, if thy ſacred watchfulnes be not preſent. For if thou leaueſt vs, we ſinke, and perish: but if thou vouchſafeſt to viſit vs, we are raiſed vp, and doe enioy life. We are inconſtant, but by thee we are ſtrengthned: we waxe cold, but by thee we receaue heate.

3. O how meanely and baſely ought I to thinke of my-ſelfe! how little, yea nothing ought I to eſteem it, if I ſeeme to haue any good! O Lord, how ought I to ſubmit my-ſelfe vnder thy vnſearchable Iudgements: where I find my-ſelfe to be nothing els, but nothing, and leſſe then nothing. O vnmeaſurable waight! O ſea that can neuer be paſſed ouer; where I find my-ſelfe only and wholy nothing! Where then is the

lurking hole of glory? Where is the confidence conceaued of vertue? Al vaine glory is ſwallowed vp in the depth of thy iudgements, which hang ouer my head.

4. What is al flesh in thy ſight? Shal clay glory againſt him that frameth it? How can he be lifted vp with vaine words, whoſe hart is truly ſubiect to God? Al the world cannot moue him to any elation of mind, whome truth hath ſubiected vnto it; neither shal he be moued with the tongues of al his praiſers, that hath ſetled his whole hope in God. For they alſo that ſpeake, behold, are nothing: they shal paſſe away with the ſound of the words: but the truth of our Lord remaineth for euer.

CHAP. XV.

What we ought to doe, & say in euery thing which we desire.

SONNE, say thus in euery thing: Lord if it be pleasing vnto thee, let this be doen in this sort. Lord if it be to thy honour, let this be doen in thy name. Lord if thou seest it expedient for me, and allowest it to be profitable, then grant vnto me, that I may vse this vnto thine honour. But if thou knowest it wil be hurtful vnto me, and not profitable to the health of my soule, take from me al such desire. For euery desire proceedeth not from the holy-Ghost, though it seeme vnto man right and good. It is hard to indge whether a good spirit, or the contrary driue thee to desire this or that: or whether also by thine owne spirit thou be

moued therunto. Many are deceaued in the end, who at the firſt ſeemed to be lead by a good ſpirit.

2. Alwaies therefore, whatſouer occurreth vnto thy mind to be deſired, let it be defired with the feare of God, and with humility of hart: and aboue al thou oughteſt to commit it vnto me with ful reſignation of thyſelfe: and thou oughteſt to ſay Lord thou knoweſt what is beſt, doe this, or that, as thou pleaſeſt. Giue what thou wilt, and how much thou wilt, and when thou wilt. Doe with me as thou knoweſt, and as beſt pleaſeth thee, and is moſt for thy honour. Set me where thou wilt, and deale with me in al things according to thy wil. I am in thy hand; turne me, and turne me againe which way ſoeuer thou pleaſe. Behold I am thy ſeruant, ready to obey thee in al things: for I deſire not to liue vnto my-ſelfe, but vnto thee: and would to God it

might be in ſome worthy and perfect manner.

A Prayer for the fulfilling of the wil of God.

5. Grant me thy grace ſweet Ieſus, that it may be with me, and labour with me, and perſeuer with me vntil the end. Grant me alwaies to deſire and wil that which is moſt acceptable vnto thee, and beſt pleaſeth thee. Let thy wil be mine, and let my wil euer follow thine, and agree perfectly with it. Let my wil and nil be al one with thine: and not to be able to wil, or refuſe any thing els, but what thou wilt, or reiecteſt.

4. Grant that I may dye to al things that are in the world, and o loue for thy ſake to be contemned,

and not to be knowne in this world. Grant that aboue al things that can be desired, I may rest in thee, and make my hart to enioy peace in thee. Thou art the true peace of the hart, thou art the only rest: out of thee al things are troublesome and vnquiet. In peace in the selfe-same; that is, in thee, one chiefest, eternal Good I wil sleep and rest. Amen.

CHAP. XVI.

That true comfort is to be sought in God alone.

WHATSOEVER I can desire, or imagine for my comfort, I look not for it in this life, but hereafter. For if I should alone haue al the comforts of the world, and might enioy al the delight therof, it is certaine that they could not long endure. Wherfore

my ſoule, thou canſt not be fully comforted, nor haue perfect delight but in God, the comforter of the poore, and the receauer of the humble. Expect a while my ſoule, expect the diuine promiſe, and thou ſhalt haue aboundance of al good things in heauen. If thou deſire inordinatly the things that are preſent, thou ſhalt looſe the celeſtial and eternal. Haue temporal things in vſe, and the eternal in deſire. Thou canſt not be filled with any temporal goods, becauſe thou art not created to enioy them.

2. Although thou enioyeſt al that is created, yet canſt thou not be happy therby nor bleſſed: but in God that hath created al things, thy whole beatitude and happines conſiſteth: not ſuch as is ſeen, and commended by the foolish louers of the world; but ſuch as the good faithful ſeruants of Chriſt expect, and the ſpiritual, & cleane of hart, whoſe con-

uerſation is in heauen, ſomtimes take a taſt of. Vaine and short is al human comfort. Bleſſed and true is the comfort which is receaued inwardly from Truth. A deuout man euery-where carrieth with him Ieſus his comforter, and ſayth vnto him: Be preſent with me Lord Ieſus in euery place, and time. Let this be my comfort to be alwaies willing to want al humane comfort. And if thy comfort be wanting, let thy wil and iuſt proofe be vnto me, as the greateſt comfort: for thou wilt not be angry alwaies, neither wilt thou threaten for euer.

CHAP. XVII.

That al our care is to be placed in God.

SONNS, ſuffer me to doe with thee what I pleaſe. I know what is expedient for thee. Thou thinkeſt as man:

thou iudgeſt in many things as humane affection perſwadeth thee. Lord, what thou ſaiſt is true. Thy ſolicitude for me is greater, then al the care that I can take for my-ſelfe. For he ſtandeth at too great a hazard, that caſteth not his whole care vpon thee. Lord, ſo that my wil may remaine right and firme in thee, doe with me whatſoeuer it shal pleaſe thee. For it cannot be but good, whatſoeuer thou doeſt with me.

2. If it be thy wil I should be in darknes, be thou bleſſed: and if it be thy wil I should be in light, be thou againe bleſſed. If thou vouchſafeſt to comfort me, be thou bleſſed: and if thou wilt afflict me, be thou alſo euer bleſſed. Sonne, ſo thou oughteſt to be, as ready to ſuffer, as to receaue ioy. Thou oughteſt to be as willing to be poore and needy, as plentiful and rich.

3. Lord, I wil willingly ſuffer for thee, whatſoeuer thy pleaſure is shal befal me. I wil receaue indifferētly frō

thy hand, good and euil, sweet, and sower, delighful and sorrowful; and giue thee thanks for al that happeneth vnto me. Keep me from al sinne, and I wil neither feare death, nor hel: so as thou dost not for euer cast me from thee, and blot me out of the book of life, what tribulation soeuer befal me, shal not hurt me.

CHAP. XVIII.

That temporal miseries, by the example of Christ, must be borne patiently.

SONNE, I descended from Heauen for thy health: I took vpon me thy miseries, my charity and not any necessity drawing me therunto, that thou mightest learne patience, & not refuse to beare temporal miseries. For from the houre of my birth, vntil my death on the Crosse, I was not

without ſuffering of griefe. I ſuffered great want of temporal things: I often heard many complaints againſt me: I bare patiently ſhame and reproches; for benefits I receaued ingratitude; for miracles, blaſphemies: for heauēly doctrine, reprehenſions.

2. Lord, for that thou wert patient in thy life-time, chiefly in fulfilling the commandment of thy Father, it is reaſon that I miſerable ſinner ſhould haue patience in al things according to thy wil, and for myne owne health beare the burden of this corruptible life, as long al thou wilt. For although this preſent life be burdenſome, yet notwithſtanding it is now by thy grace made very meritorious: and by thy example and the foot-ſteps of thy Saints, more plaine, and tollerable to the weake. Yea, much more comfortable alſo, then it was in times paſt in the old law, when the gate of heauen remained shut: and the way alſo

to heauen seemed darker, when so few tooke care to seeke after thy Kingdome. Neither they also that then were iust, and were ordained to be saued, could enter into the heauenlie glorie before thy passion, and the debt of thy sacred death was discharged.

3. O how great thanks am I bound to giue thee, that thou hast vouchsafed to shew vnto me, and to al faithful soules a direct, & sure way to thy euerlasting Kingdome! For thy life is our way, and by holy patience we goe vnto thee that art our crowne. If thou hadst not gone before vs and taught vs, who would haue taken care to follow thee? Alas how many would stay behind, and remaine far off, if they beheld not thy excellent examples! Behold we are yet cold although we haue heard of so many of thy wonders, and thy heauenly documents! what would become of vs if we had not so great light to follow thee?

CHAP. XIX.

Of ſuffering of iniuries: and who is proued to be truly patient.

WHAT is it thou ſayſt, Sonne? Ceaſe to complaine, conſidering my paſſion, and that of my other Saints. Thou haſt not yet made reſiſtance to the sheeding of bloud. It is but little thou ſuffereſt, in compariſon of them that haue ſuffered ſo much, ſo ſtrongly tempted, ſo grieuouſly afflicted, ſo many waies tried and exerciſed. Thou oughteſt therfore to cal to mind the heauy ſufferings of others, that thou maiſt the eaſier beare the little aduerſities which thou ſuffereſt. And if they ſeem not little, beware leſt thy impatience be cauſe therof. Yet whether they be little or great, endeauour to beare al patiently.

2. How much the better thou dispo-ſeſt thy-ſelfe to ſuffering; ſo much the more wiſely thou doeſt, & ſo much the more doeſt thou merit: thou ſhalt more eaſily alſo endure it, if thy mind be prepared, and thy-ſelfe accuſtomed therunto. Doe not ſay, I cannot ſuffer theſe things of ſuch an one, at the hands of ſuch a perſon, nor, ſuch things are not to be ſuffered by me, for he hath done me great wrong, & vpbraided me with thoſe things which I neuer thought of: but of another I wil willingly ſuffer, & as I shal ſee cauſe. Such a thought is foolish; it conſidereth not the vertue of patience, nor by whome it shal be crowned, but rather waigheth the perſons, and the iniuries offered.

3. He is not truly patient, that wil not ſuffer but as much as he thinketh good, and by whome he liſteth. But he that is indeed patient, mindeth not by whome he is exerciſed; whether by his Superiours, or ſome

of

of his equals, or by his inferiours: whether by a good and holy man, or by a peruerse and vnworthy person. But indifferently from al creatures, how much soeuer, or how often soeuer any aduersity happeneth vnto him, he taketh al thankfully as from the hands of God, and esteemeth it a great gaine: for that nothing before God, how little soeuer, so it be suffered for God, can be without merit.

4. Be thou therfore alwaies prepared for the fight, if thou wilt haue thy victory. Without combate thou canst not attaine vnto the crowne of patience. If thou wilt not suffer, thou refusest to be crowned. But if thou desirest to be crowned, fight manfully, and endure patiently: without labour there is no comming to rest: nor without fight can the victory be obtained. Lord let that be made possible to me by thy grace, which seemeth impossible to me by nature. Thou knowest that I can suffer

little, and that I am quickly dismayed, when a smal aduersity ariseth. Let al exercise of tribulatiõ be made pleasing vnto me, and be welcome for thy name: for to suffer & to be troubled for thee, is very profitable for my soule.

CHAP. XX.

Of the acknowledging of our owne infirmities: and of the miseries of this life.

I Wil confesse against me my iniustice: I wil confesse vnto thee, o Lord, my infirmities. Oftentimes it is a smal matter that discomforteth, and grieueth me. I purpose to resist with courage, but when a smal temptation cõmeth, it bringeth me into very narrow straits. It is somtimes a very trifle, from whence great temptations doe proceed. And whileſt I thinke my-selfe

somwhat safe, when I least expect it, I find my-selfe somtimes ouercome with a smal blast.

2. Behold therfore, Lord, my imbecillity, and frailty euery way knowne vnto thee. Haue mercy on me & deliuer me out of the mire of my infirmities, that I stick not fast therin: Let me not for euer remaine deiected. This is that which oftentimes beareth me back, & confoundeth me in thy sight, for that I am so subiect to fal, and weake in resisting of my passions. And though I doe not altogeather consent, yet their continual assaults are troublesome and grieuous vnto me: and it is tedious, and a very irksome thing to liue thus daily in strife. Hereby my infirmity is made knowne vnto me: for that wicked fancies doe alwaies much more easily enter in vpon me, then they can be cast out againe.

3. O mighty God of Israel, the zealous louer of faithful soules; let it please thee

to consider the labour and sorrow of thy seruant, and assist him in al whatsoeuer he vndertaketh. Strengthen me with heauenly force, lest my old man, my miserable flesh, not fully as yet subiect to the spirit, preuaile and get the vpper hand: against which I ought to fight, as long as I breath in this miserable life. Alas, what a kind of life is this, where tribulations & miseries are neuer wanting! where al is set with snares, and compassed with enemies! For when one tribulation or temptation goeth away, another commeth, yea and during the first conflict also, many others come vnlooked for, one after another.

4. And how can a life be loued that hath so many afflictions, and is subiect to so many calamities and miseries? How is it called a life that begetteth so many deaths, and plagues? And yet it is loued, & many seek to delight themselues therin. The world is oftentimes blamed, that it is deceitful and vaine,

and yet it is not easily forsaken, because the inclinations of our flesh doe too much ouer-rule vs. Some things draw vs to loue it, others to contemne it. To the loue of the world doe draw vs the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life: but the paynes and miseries that doe iustly follow them, causeth a hatred and loathsomnes therof.

5. But alas wicked pleasure ouercometh the mind which is giuen ouer to the world; and she esteemeth it a delight to be vnder thorns, because she hath neither seen nor tasted the sweetnes of God, and the inward delight of vertue. But they that perfectly contemne the world, and endeauour to liue to God vnder holy discipline, these are not ignorant of the diuine sweetnes, promised to the true forsakers of the world, and doe more cleerly see how grieuously the world erreth, and how it is many waies deceiued.

CHAP. XXI.

That we are to rest in God aboue al his guifts.

ABoue al things, and in al things, my soule, thou shalt euer rest in God, for he is the euerlasting rest of the Saints. Grant me most sweet and louing Iesu, to rest in thee aboue al creatures, aboue al health & beauty, aboue al glory and honour, aboue al power and dignity, aboue al knowledge and learning, aboue al riches and arts, aboue al ioy and gladnes, aboue al fame and praise, aboue al sweetnes and comfort, aboue al hope & promise, aboue al merit and desire, aboue al guifts and presents that thou canst giue & impart vnto vs, aboue al ioy and iubily that the mind of man can receaue and feele: lastly aboue Angels and Archangels,

and aboue al the heauenly Hoſt, aboue al viſible and inuiſible things, and aboue al that, that thou art not, my God.

2. For that thou, my Lord God, ſurpaſſeſt al; thou alone moſt high, thou alone moſt powerful, thou alone moſt ful and ſufficient, thou alone moſt ſweet and comfortable, thou alone moſt beautiful, and louing, thou alone moſt noble and glorious aboue al things: in whome al good things togeather both are perfectly, and euer haue been, and shal be: and therfore it is too little & not ſufficient, whatſoeuer thou beſtoweſt on me beſides thy-ſelfe, or reuealeſt vnto me of thy-ſelfe, or promiſeſt, whileſt thou art not ſeen, and not fully obtained: for ſurely my hart cannot reſt, nor be fully contented vnleſſe it reſt in thee, and ſurmount al guifts and creatures whatſoeuer.

3. O my moſt beloued ſpouſe Chriſt

Iesus, the most chast louer, the gouernour of al creatures: who wil giue me wings of true liberty to fly, and rest in thee! O when shal it be fully granted me to consider in quietnes of mind, and see how sweet thou art my Lord God! When shal I fully recollect my self in thee, that for thy loue I may not feele my-selfe, but thee alone, aboue al sense, and feeling, in a manner not knowne vnto al. But now I oftentimes lament, and beare my infelicity with griefe. For that many euils occurre in this vale of miseries, which doe often trouble, grieue, and darken me; often hinder and distract me, allure and intangle me, to the end I should not haue free accesse vnto thee, & that I should not enioy thy sweet and heauenly embracings, which thou alwaies giuest to the blessed and celestial spirits. Let my sighes & manifold desolations on earth moue thee.

4. O Iesus, splendour of eternal

glory, & comfort of the pilgrime-ſoule, with thee is my tongue without voice, & my ſilence ſpeaketh vnto thee. How long doth my Lord delay to come? Let him come vnto me his poore ſeruant, and make me glad. Let him put out his hãd, to deliuer me miſerable wretch, frõ al anguish. Come, come bleſſed Lord: for without thee I shal haue no ioyful day, nor houre. Thou art my ioy, and without thee there is nothing but want. A wretched creature I am, and in a manner impriſoned, and loaden with irons: vntil thou comforteſt me with the light of thy preſence, and giueſt me liberty, and shewest a fauourable countenance vnto me.

5. Let others ſeek what they pleaſe inſteed of thee: but for me, nothing els doth, nor shal delight me, but thou only my God, my hope, my euerlaſting health. I wil not hold my peace, nor ceaſe to pray, vntil thy grace returne againe, and thou ſpeake inwardly

vnto me. Behold I am heer: behold I come vnto thee, because thou hast called vpon me. Thy teares, and the desire of thy soule, thy humility, and the contrition of thy hart, haue inclined, and brought me vnto thee. And I sayd: Lord I haue called thee, and haue desired to enioy thee, being ready to forsake al things for thee. For thou first hast stirred me vp that I might seeke thee. Blessed be thou therfore, O Lord, that hast shewed this goodnes to thy seruant, according to the multitude of thy mercies.

6. What hath thy seruant more to say before thee, but that he doe greatly humble himselfe in thy sight, alwaies mindful of his owne iniquity, & basenes? For there is none like vnto thee in al whatsoeuer is wonderful, in heauen and earth. Thy words are good, thy iudgements true, & by thy prouidence al things are gouerned. Praise therfore and glory be vnto thee, O wisdome of

the eternal Father: let my tongue, my ſoule, & al creatures togeather praiſe and bleſſe thee.

CHAP. XXII.

Of the remembrance of the manifold benefits of God.

OPen, O Lord, my hart in thy Law, and teach me to walke in thy Commandments. Grant me to vnderſtand thy wil, and to remember thy benefits, as wel in general, as in particuler, with great reuerence and diligent conſideration: that hence forward I may be able worthily to giue thee thanks. But I know, and confeſſe, that I am not able to giue thee due thanks, for the fauours which thou beſtoweſt vpon me, euen in the leaſt moment. I am leſſe then the leaſt of thy benefits: and when I cõſider the excellẽcy of thy Maieſty, the greatnes therof maketh my

ſpirit to faint.

2. Al that we haue in our ſoule and body, and whatſoeuer we poſſeſſe outwardly or inwardly, naturally or ſpiritually, are thy benefits, and doe praiſe thee, as bountiful, pious, & good, from whome we haue receaued al that is good. Although one haue receaued more, another leſſe, al notwithſtanding are thine, and without thee euen the leaſt cannot be had. He that hath receaued greater, cannot glory of his owne deſert, nor extol himſelfe, aboue others, nor inſult ouer the leſſer: for he is greater and better that aſcribeth leaſt vnto himſelfe, and is more humble and deuout in rendring thanks. And he that eſteemeth himſelfe baſeſt of al men, and iudgeth himſelfe moſt vnworthy, is fitteſt to receaue greater bleſſings.

3. And he that hath receaued fewer, ought not to be ſory nor beare it impatiently, nor enuy them that are en-

riched with greater ſtore, but attend rather vnto thee, and chiefly praiſe thy goodnes, for that thou beſtoweſt thy guifts ſo bountifully, ſo freely, and ſo willingly without reſpect of perſons. Al things proceed from thee, and therfore in al things thou art to be praiſed. Thou knoweſt what is fit to be giuen to euery one; and why this man hath leſſe, and he more, it is not ours, but thine to determine: who doſt waigh in iuſt meaſure the deſerts of euery one.

4. Wherfore, my Lord God, I eſteeme it as a great benefit, not to haue much, wherby outwardly and before men I might ſeeme worthy of praiſe & glory: ſo that he, who conſidereth his owne pouerty, and baſenes, ought not therfore to conceaue griefe, or ſorrow, or to be therfore troubled, but rather to take great comfort, and to be glad: for that thou, O God, haſt choſen the poore and humble, and the deſpiſed of this world for thy-ſelfe, and for thy

familiar and domestical freinds. Witnesses are thy Apostles themselues, whō thou hast appointed Princes ouer al the earth. And yet they liued without complaint in the world, so humble and simple, meane to the eyes of men, without al malice and deceit, that they reioyced to receaue contumelies for thy name, and what the world abhorreth, they embraced with great affection.

5. Nothing therfore ought so to reioyce him that loueth thee, & acknowledgeth thy benefits, as the accomplishment of thy wil in himselfe, and the pleasure of thy eternal appointmēt; wherwith he ought to be so contented & comforted, that he would as willingly be the least, as any would wish to be the greatest: and as peaceable and content in the last as in the first place: and as willingly to be despised and contemned, and to be of no esteeme or account, as to be preferred in honour before al others, and to be greater in the

world. For thy wil and the loue of thy glory, ought to be preferred before al things: & to cõfort him more, & pleaſe him better, then al the benefits which he hath receaued, or can deſire.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of foure things that bring much peace.

SOnne, now I wil teach thee the way of peace, and true liberty. Doe Lord, I beſeech thee, as thou ſaiſt, for I shal be very glad to heare it. Endeauour my Sonne to doe rather the wil of another, then thine owne. Euer chooſe rather to haue leſſe then more. Alwaies ſeeke the loweſt place, and to be inferiour to euery one. Wish alwaies, and pray, that the wil of God may be wholy fulfilled in thee. Behold ſuch a men entreth into the limits of peace, and

most quiet rest.

2. Lord, this thy short speach containeth much perfection. It is little in words but ful in sense, & aboundant in fruit. For if it could exactly be kept me, then should I not so easily be troubled. For as often as I feele my self vnquiet and afflicted, I find that I haue straied from this doctrine. But thou that canst al things, and euer louest the good and profit of my soule, increase in me thy grace, that I may fulfil thy words, and perfect mine owne health.

A prayer against euil thoughts.

3. My Lord God, be not farre from me; my God haue regard to help me: For sundry thoughts haue risen vp against me, and great feares, afflicting my soule. How shal I passe through them without hurt? How shal I breake them? I, saith he, wil goe before thee, and wil humble the glorious of the earth,

earth. I wil open the dores of the priſon, and reueale vnto thee hidden ſecrets. Doe Lord as thou ſaieſt, and let al euil thoughts fly from before thy face. This is my hope, and my only comfort, to fly vnto thee in al tribulation, to truſt in thee, to cal vpon thee from my hart, and to expect patiently thy comfort.

A prayer for enlightning of the mind.

4. Enlighten me O good Ieſu, with the clearnes of inward light, and expel al darknes of my hart. Repreſſe the many wauering thoughts, and beare downe the fury of the temptatiõs which violently aſſault me. Fight ſtrongly for me, and vanquish the euil beaſt, that is, the alluring concupiſcences, that peace may be made in thy vertue, and aboundance of thy praiſe ſound in thy holy Court, which is a pure conſcience.

Command the winds and tempeſts: ſay vnto the ſea; Be ſtil: & to the north-wind, Blow not; and a great calme shal enſue.

5. Send forth thy light & thy truth, that they may shine vpon the earth: for *I* am empty and vnprofitable earth, vntil thou imparteſt thy light vnto me. Powre out thy grace from aboue, wash my hart with heauenly dew, giue waters of deuotion, to wash the face of the earth, to bring forth good and perfect fruit. Lift vp my mind, ouer-charged with the waight of Sinne: draw vp my whole deſire to heauenly treaſures, that hauing taſted the ſweetnes of celeſtial happines, it may loath to thinke of earthly vanityes.

6. Take me violently to thee, and deliuer me from al vnſtable comfort of creatures: for no created thing can fully quiet and ſatisfy my deſire. Ioyne me vnto thee with an vnſpeakable band of loue: for thou only filleſt the

mind of him that loues thee, and without thee al things are distastful.

CHAP. XXIIII.

Of flying curious inquiry of the life of others.

SOnne, be not curious: trouble not thy-selfe with idle cares. What is this or that to thee? doe thou follow me. For what is it to thee, whether that man be such or no, or whether this man doe, or speake this or that? Thou shalt not need to answer for others, but shalt giue account of thy-selfe. Why therfore doest thou trouble thy selfe? Behold *I* know euery one what he is, and doe see al things that are vnder the sunne: and doe vnderstand how it is with euery one; what he thinketh, what he would, & at what his intention

aymeth. Al things therfore are to be committed vnto me: but doe thou keep thy-selfe in good peace, & suffer the vnquiet to doe as they wil. Whatsoeuer they shal haue done, or said, shal fal vpon themselues, for they cannot deceaue me.

2. Desire not too great fame in this world, nor to be known to many, nor to haue the priuate loue of men: for these things breed distractions, and cause great darknes of hart. I would willingly vtter my words, and reueale my secrets vnto thee, if thou didest diligently obserue my comming, and didest open the dore of thy hart vnto me. Be careful and watch in prayer, and humble thy-selfe in al things.

CHAP. XXV.

Wherin doth the firme peace of the hart, and true profit consist.

SOnne, I haue said: Peace I leaue to you, my peace I giue to you: not as the world giueth, doe I giue to you. Al doe desire peace, but al care not for those things that appertaine vnto true peace. My peace is with the humble, & meeke of hart. Thy peace shal be in much patience. If thou wilt heare me and follow my voice thou maist enioy much peace. What thē shal I doe Lord? In euery thing attend vnto thy-selfe what thou doest, and what thou saiest: & direct thy whole intention vnto this, that thou maiest please me alone, and desire or seek nothing out of me. Of the sayings and doings of others, iudge nothing rashly: neither doe thou intangle

thy-selfe with things not cõmitted vnto thee: & doing thus, it may be thou shalt be little or seldome troubled.

2. But neuer to feele any trouble at al, nor to suffer any griefe of hart or body, is not the state of this life, but of euerlasting rest. Thinke not therfore that thou hast found true peace, if thou feelest no sorrow, nor that then al is wel, if thou haue no aduersary: nor that it is perfect, if al things be done according to thy desire. Neither doe thou then esteem highly of thy-selfe, or imagine thy-selfe to be specially beloued, if thou be in great deuotion, and sweetnes: for in these things a true louer of vertue is not tried: neither doth the profit and perfection of man consist in hauing them.

3. Wherin then Lord? In offering thy-selfe from the very bottom of thy hart, vnto the diuine seruice, not seeking thine owne interest, or cõmodity, neither in great not little, neither in

tyme nor eternity: so that with equal countenance, thou maist persist in thanks-giuing, both in prosperity and in aduersity, waighing al things with an equal ballance. If thou be of such courage and so patient in hope, that when inward comfort is withdrawn frō thee, thou prepare thy hart to suffer greater matters, and not iustify thy-selfe, as though thou oughtest not to suffer these, and so great afflictons, but iustify me in whatsoeuer I appoint, and praise my Holy name; then thou walkest in the true and right way of peace: and thou shalt haue vndoubted hope to see my face againe with great ioy. And if thou attaine to the ful contempt of thy-selfe; then shalt thou enioy as great aboundance of peace, as thy banishment may permit.

CHAP. XXVI.

Of the excellency of a free mind, which humble prayer better deserueth, then reading.

LOrd, it is the worke of a perfect man, neuer to slack his mind from the attentiue thought of heauenly things, and as it were to passe without care through many cares: not faintingly, but with a certaine priuiledge of a free mind, adhering by inordinate affection to no creature.

2. I beseech thee most merciful God, preserue me from the cares of this life; lest I should be too much intangled therby: and from the many necessities of the body, lest I should be enthralled by pleasure: from al hindrances of the soule, lest broken with troubles I should be deiected and dismayed. I

meane not frō thoſe things that worldly vanity ſo greatly deſireth: but from thoſe miſeries, that as punishments, doe weigh down and hinder the ſoule of thy ſeruant, with the general curſe of mortality, that it cannot enter into liberty of ſpirit, as often as it would.

3. O my God, the vnſpeakable ſweetnes, make bitter vnto me al carnal cōfort, which may draw me away from the loue of euerlaſting happynes, and wickedly allure me to it-ſelfe with the force of certaine preſent delight. Let not flesh and bloud ouercome me, O Lord. Let not the world and the short glory therof deceaue me. Let not the Diuel and his ſubtil fraud ſupplant me. Giue me force to reſiſt, patience to ſuffer, and conſtancy to perſeuer. Giue me inſteed of al comforts of the world the moſt ſweet vnction of thy ſpirit, & in lieu of carnal loue, powre into my ſoule the loue of thy name.

4. Behold, meat, drinke, cloathes,

and other neceſſaries for the maintenance of the body, are burdenſome vnto a feruent ſpirit. Grant me to affect ſuch nourishments in due meaſure, & not to be intangled with an ouer great deſire of them. It is not lawful to renounce them wholy, for that nature is to be maintayned: but to deſire ſuperfluityes, and thoſe things that doe rather delight then ſuſtaine, the law of God forbiddeth: for otherwiſe the flesh would rebel againſt the ſpirit. Herein I beſeech thee, let thy hand gouerne me, & teach me, that I may not exceed.

CHAP. XXVII.

That priuate loue moſt hindreth from the chiefeſt Good.

SOnne, thou oughteſt to giue al for al, and to retaine nothing of thyſelfe. Know that the loue of thy-ſelfe,

doth hurt thee more, then any thing in the world. According to the loue, & affection thou beareſt them, ſo doth euery thing cleaue vnto thee more or leſſe. If thy loue be pure, ſimple, and wel ordered, thou shalt be free from bondage. Couet not that which thou maieſt not haue. Be not willing to haue that, which may hinder thee and depriue thee of inward liberty. It is a wonderful thing that thou committeſt not thy-ſelfe wholy vnto me, from the bottome of thy hart, with al things, that thou canſt deſire, or haue.

2. Why doſt thou conſume thy ſelfe with vaine griefe? Why tyreſt thou thy mind with needleſſe cares? Reſigne thy-ſelfe to me, & thou shalt feele no loſſe at al. If thou ſeekeſt this or that, and wouldeſt be heere or there, to enioy thine owne commodity and pleaſure; thou shalt neuer be in quiet, nor free from trouble of mind: for in euery thing, ſomwhat wil be wanting, and

in euery place there wil be ſome that wil Croſſe thee.

3. Not euery external thing therfore attained, and heaped togeather helpeth thee: but it rather auaileth if thou deſpiſe it, and doeſt root it out from thy hart; which thou muſt not vnderſtand only of thy reuenewes and wealth, but of the deſire of honour alſo, and vaine praiſe; al which doe paſſe away with this fading world. The place auayleth little, if the ſpirit of feruour be wanting: neither shal that peace which is ſought abroad long continue, if the ſtate of thy hart be deſtitute of a true foundation: that is, vnleſſe thou perſiſt in me, thou maiſt change, but not better thy-ſelfe. For when occaſion doth happen, thou shalt find that which thou ſoughteſt to fly; and perhaps more.

A prayer for cleansing the hart, and obtayning of heauenly wisdome.

4. Confirme me O Lord with the grace of thy holy spirit. Giue me force to strengthen my inward man, and to purge my hart from al vnprofitable care, and griefe; not to be drawn away with sundry desires of any thing either little or great: but to consider al things, how they are transitory, & doe quickly fade, and that my-selfe doe also passe away togeather with them: for nothing is permanent vnder the sunne, where al things are vanity, and affliction of mind. O how wise is he that so considereth them.

5. Grant me, O Lord, heauenly wisdome, that I may learne aboue al things to seeke and find thee, aboue al things to delight in thee, and to loue thee, and to thinke of al created things as they are, according to the dispo-

tion of thy wisdome. Grant me prudently to auoyd him that flatters me, and to suffer patiently him that contradicts me. It is great wisdome not to be moued with euery blast of words: not to giue eare to dangerous flattery: for so we shal goe on securely in the way which we haue begun.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Against the tongue of Slanderers.

SOnne, be not grieued if some thinke euil of thee, and speake that which thou dost not willingly heare. Thou oughtest to iudge the worst of thy-selfe and to thinke no man weaker then thy-selfe. If thou walke according to spirit, thou wilt not much esteem of flying words. It is not smal wisdome, to be silent in tyme of euil, and inwardly to turne to me, and not to be troubled

with the iudgement of men.

2. Let not thy peace be in the tongues of men. For whether they iudge wel or euil, thou art neuertheleſſe alwaies the ſame. Where is true peace, & true glory? Is it not in me? And he that coueteth not to pleaſe men, nor feareth to diſpleaſe them, ſhal enioy much peace. From inordinate loue and vaine feare ariſeth al diſquiet of hart and diſtraction of the ſenſes.

CHAP. XXIX.

How we ought to cal vpon God, and bleſſe him when tribulation draweth neer.

BLeſſed (O Lord) be thy name for euer; ſince it pleaſeth thee that this temptation and tribulation ſhould fal vpon me. I cannot fly it, but haue need to fly to thee, that thou maiſt help me, &

turne it to my good. Lord I am now afflicted, and it is not wel with me, I am much troubled with this present griefe. And now, beloued Father, what shal I say? I am taken in narrow straits, saue me in this houre. Yea therfore I am fallē into this houre, that thou maist be glorified, when I shal be greatly humbled, and by thee deliuered. Let it please thee Lord to deliuer me: for, poore wretch that I am, what can I doe, and whither shal I goe without thee? Grant patience Lord, euen this tyme also. Help me my God, and then I wil not feare how much soeuer I be oppressed.

2. And now in this, what shal I say? Lord, thy wil be done, *I* haue wel deserued to be afflicted and grieued. Surely *I* ought to beare it: and *I* would to God *I* might beare it with patience, vntil the tempest be passed ouer, and it become calme. But thy omnipotent hand is able to take this tempta-

temptation from me, and to asswage the violence therof, that I vtterly sinke not vnder it, as oftentimes heretofore thou hast done vnto me, my Mercy. And how much the more hard it is to me, so much the more easy is this change of thy mighty hand to thee.

CHAP. XXX.

Of craving the aid, and confidence of recovering grace.

SONNE, I am thy Lord, who doe vse to giue comfort in the day of tribulation. Come vnto me when it is not wel with thee. This is that which most of al hindreth heauenly consolation, that thou art slow in turning thy-selfe vnto praier. For before thou dost earnestly commend thy-selfe to me, thou seekest many comforts, and delightest thy-selfe in outward things.

And hence it proceedeth that al doth little profit thee, vntil thou consider that I am he, that deliuer those that trust in me: and that out of me there is neither powerful help, nor profitable counsel, nor remedy that can continue. But now thou hauing recouered breath after the tempest, gather strength againe in the light of my mercies: for I am at hand saith our Lord, to repaire al, not only entirely, but also abundantly.

2. Is there any thing hard to me? Or am I like vnto him that promiseth and performeth not? Where is thy faith? Be firme and constant. Take courage and be patient; comfort wil be giuen thee in due time. Attend me, expect, I wil come and cure thee. It is a temptation that vexeth thee: and a vaine feare that affrighteth thee, What els doth the care for future incertainties bring thee, but sorrow vpon sorrow? Sufficient for the day is the euil therof. It is a vaine

and vnprofitable thing to be grieued, or to reioice for future things, that perhaps wil neuer happen.

3. But it is incident to man, to be deluded with ſuch imaginations: and a ſigne of little courage to be ſo eaſily drawne away by the ſuggeſtion of the enemy. For he careth not ſo he delude and deceaue thee, whether it be true or falſe which he propoſeth: whether he ouerthrow thee with the loue of preſent, or the feare of future things. Let not therfore thy hart be troubled, neither doe thou feare. Belieue in me and put thy truſt in my mercie. When thou thinkeſt thy-ſelfe furtheſt off from me, oftentimes I am neereſt vnto thee. When thou iudgeſt that almoſt al is loſt, thē oftētimes greateſt gaine of merit is at hand. Al is not loſt when any thing falleth out cōtrary vnto thee. Thou muſt not iudge according to that which thou feeleſt for the preſent; nor giue thy-ſelfe ouer to any

griefe from whence ſoeuer it commeth, as though al hope of deliuery were quite gone.

4. Thinke not thy-ſelfe wholy left although for a time I haue ſent thee ſome tribulation, or withdrawn thy deſired comfort: for this is the way to the Kingdome of heauen. And without doubt it is more expedient for thee, and the reſt of my ſeruants, that ye be exerciſed with many aduerſities, then that ye ſhould haue al things according to your deſires. I know the ſecret thoughts of thy hart, and that it is very expedient for thy ſoules health, that thou be left ſomtimes without taſt and feeling of ſpiritual ſweetnes, leſt perhaps thou ſhouldeſt be puffed vp with good ſucceſſe, & ſhouldeſt pleaſe thy-ſelfe in that which thou art not. That which I haue giuen, I can take away, and reſtore it againe when I pleaſe.

5. When I giue it, it is mine:

when I withdraw it, I take not any thing that is thine: for mine is euerie good and euerie perfect guift. If I send thee affliction, or any Crosse whatsoeuer, repine not, nor be not dismayd: I can quickly lift thee vp againe, and turne al thy sorrow into ioy. Neuertheless I am iust, and greatly to be praised, when I doe al this vnto thee.

6. If thou be wise, and consider wel thy case, thou wilt neuer yeald so cowardly to griefe, for any aduersity that befalles thee, but rather reioyce & giue thanks: yea to account this thy only ioy, that afflicting thee with sorrowes, I doe not spare thee. As my Father hath loued me, I also loue you, said I vnto my beloued Disciples; whom certainly I sent not to temporal ioyes, but to great conflicts: not to honours, but to contempts: not to idlenes, but to labours: not to rest, but to bring much fruit in patience. My Sonne remember these words.

CHAP. XXXI.

Of the contempt of al creatures, to find our Creatour.

LORD, I ſtand yet in need of great grace, if I muſt goe ſo farre as that no man or creature can hinder me. For as long as any thing holdeth me, I cannot fly freely vnto thee. He deſired to fly with great liberty that ſaid: Who wil giue me wings like a doue, and I wil fly and reſt? What thing more quiet then a ſimple eye? And what more free, thē he that deſireth nothing vpon earth? Man ought therfore to aſcend aboue al creatures, and perfectly to forſake himſelfe, and to remaine in exceſſe of mind: and conſider that thou, who art the Maker of al things, haſt nothing amongſt creatures like vnto thee. And vnleſſe a man be free from the affection of al creatures, he cannot with freedome of

mind attend vnto diuine things. And for this cause there are so few contemplatiue men to be found, for that few can wholy sequester themselues from fading creatures.

2. Much grace is necessarie to lift-vp a soule, and to carry it aboue itselfe. And vnlesse a man be lifted vp in spirit, and deliuered from al creatures, and wholy vnited vnto God; whatsoeuer he knoweth, and whatsoeuer he hath, is of little account. Long shal he be little, and lye in earthly basenes, that esteemeth any thing great, but the one only vnmeasurable & eternal Good. For whatsoeuer is not God is nothing, and ought to be accounted as nothing. There is great difference betweene the wisdome of a spiritual and deuout person, and the knowledge of a learned & studious Clerke. Farre more noble is that learning which floweth from aboue from the diuine influence, then that which is painfully

gotten by the wit of man.

3. There are many that desire contemplation, but they endeauour not to exercise those things that are required therunto. It is a great hinderance that we rest in signes and sensible things, and haue little true mortification. I know not what it is, nor by what spirit we are lead, nor what we pretend, we that seeme to be called spiritual, that we take so much paines, and so great care for transitory and base things, & scarce or seldome thinke of our owne inward profit, with ful recollection of our senses.

4. Alas, presently after a sleight recollection, we breake forth, and weigh not our words with diligent examination. We mind not where our affectiõs lye: nor bewaile the impurity & many faults that are in al our actions. For al flesh had corrupted her way, and therfore did that general floud ensue. Sith our inward affection then is much cor-

rupted, it must needs be that our actiõs proceeding therof, be corrupted, as a signe of the want of inward vigour. From a pure hart proceedeth the fruit of good life.

5. We aske how much one hath done: but how vertuous his actions are, is not so diligently considered. We inquire whether he be strong, rich, beautiful, handsome, a good writer, a good singer, or a good labourer: but how poore he is in spirit, how patient, and meeke, how deuout and spirituall, is seldome spoken of. Nature respecteth outward things, grace turneth herselfe to the inward vertues. That is often deceaued: it this hath her trust in God, to the end she be not deceaued.

CHAP. XXXII.

Of denial of our ſelues, and forſaking al our affections.

SONNE, thou canſt not poſſeſſe perfect libertie, vnleſſe thou wholy deny thy ſelfe. Al ſuch as be louers of themſelues are bound in fetters; they are couetous, curious, wanderers, ſeekers of eaſe, and not of thoſe things that appertaine to Ieſus Chriſt; but oftentimes deuiſing, and framing that which wil not continue. For al ſhal perish that proceedeth not from God. Keep this short and complete word: Forſake al, & thou ſhalt find al. Leaue thy inordinate deſires, and thou ſhalt find reſt. Conſider this wel: and when thou haſt fulfilled it, thou ſhalt vnderſtand al.

2. Lord, this is not one dayes

worke, nor childrens ſport: yea in this ſhort ſentence al the perfection of Religious perſons is included. Sonne, thou muſt not goe back, nor ſtraight waies be deiected, when thou heareſt the way of the perfect; but rather be ſtirred vp to more worthy and noble attempts, or at leaſt to conceaue an earneſt deſire therof. I would it were ſo wel with thee, and thou wert come ſo farre, that thou wert no longer a louer of thy-ſelfe, but didſt ſtand meerly at my beck, and at his whom I haue appointed a Father ouer thee: thē thou shouldeſt exceedingly pleaſe me, and al thy life would paſſe away in ioy & peace. Thou haſt yet many things to forſake which vnleſſe thou wholy reſigne ouer vnto me, thou shalt not attaine to that which thou deſireſt. I counſel thee to buy of me purified gold, that thou mayſt become rich, that is, heauenly wiſdome, which treadeth vnder-foot al baſe and earthly things. Set

little by the wisdome of this world, and esteeme not of the contentment of men, nor thine owne fancyes.

3. I said, that thou shouldest buy the meane & base things, with the precious, and those that were with men of great esteeme. For true heauenlie wisdome seemeth very base, and of smal account, and is scarce thought of by men: for that esteemeth not highly of it-selfe, nor seeketh to be magnified vpon earth: which many praise from the teeth outward, but in their life they are farre from it: yet is it the precious pearle which is hidden from many.

CHAP. XXXII.

Of inconſtancie of the hart, and of directing our final intentions vnto God.

SONNE, truſt not to thy affection: that which now is, wil quickly change into another. As long as thou liueſt thou art ſubiect to mutability, euen againſt thy wil: ſo that now thou art merry, now ſad, now quiet, now troubled, now deuout, now diſtracted, now diligent, now idle, now heauy, now light. But he that is wiſe, and wel inſtructed in ſpirit, remaineth alwaies one in the middeſt of the changes, not heeding what he ſeeketh in himſelfe, or which way the wind of mutability bloweth; but that the whole intention of his mind, may tend as it ought, to the moſt perfect and beſt end. For ſo

he may cõtinue one, and the selfe same, without any change in the midst of so manie sundry chances, directing alwaies the sincere eye of his intention vnto me.

2. And how much purer the eye of the intention is, so much the more constantly doth he passe through the variety of many contrary waues. But in many things the eye of a sincere intention wexath blind, for it quickly looketh vpon some delightsome obiect that occurreth. And it is rare to find one that is wholy free from al blemish of seeking himselfe. So the Iewes in times past came into Bethania to Martha and Marie, not for Iesus alone, but to see Lazarus also. The eye of our intention therfore, is to be purged, that it may be sincere and pure, and to be directed vnto me, neglecting the multitude and variety of earthly obiects.

CHAP. XXXIIII.

That God is ſweet aboue al things, and in al things, to him that loueth.

BEHOLD, my God, and al things! What would I haue more, and what can I deſire more happy? O ſweet and comfortable word! but to him that loueth the Word, not the world, nor thoſe things that are in the world. My God, and al things! Enough is ſaid to him that vnderſtandeth: and it is pleaſant to him that loueth to repeat it often. For when thou art preſent, al things doe yeald delight, but when thou art abſét, al becomes irkſome. Thou giueſt quiet of hart and much peace, and pleaſant ioy. Thou makeſt men think wel of al, and praiſe thee in al things: neither can any thing pleaſe vs long

without thee: but if it be pleasant and delighsome, thy grace must be present, and it must be seasoned with the sweetnes of thy wisdome.

2. What can be distastful vnto him, to whome thou art pleasing: And whom thou delightest not, what can be to him pleasant? But the wise of this world, and that haue their contentment in sensual things, cannot attaine to thy wisdome: for in the world is much vanity, and in the flesh is death. But they that follow thee by the cõtempt of worldly things, and mortification of the flesh, are proued to be truly wise: for they are changed from vanitie to truth, from flesh to spirit. To these God is sweet, and what good soeuer is found in creatures, they wholy referre vnto the praise of their Maker. Notwithstanding great, yea verie great, is the difference between the sweetnes of the Creatour, and of the creature, of eternity and of time, of vncreated and created light.

3.

3. O euerlasting light, surpassing al created lights, cast forth the beams of thy brightnesse from aboue, and pierce the most inward corners of my hart: purify, reioyce, clarify, and quicken my spirit with al the powers therof, that I may cleaue vnto thee with excesse of vnspeakable ioy. O when wil that blessed and desired houre come, that I may be filled with thy presence, & thou maist be vnto me al, in al things! As long as this is not granted me, I shal not haue ful nor perfect ioy. Alas! my old man yet liueth in me, he is not wholy crucified, he is not perfectly dead. He doth yet couet strongly against the spirit, and moueth euil warres, and suffereth not the Kingdome of my soule to be in peace.

4. But thou that rulest the powers of the sea, and asswagest the motion of the waues, rise and help me: dissipate the people that desire war, and destroy them in thy might, and let thy

hand be glorified: for there is no hope nor refuge for me, but in thee, my Lord God.

CHAP. XXXV.

That there is no security from temptation in this life.

SONNE, there is no securitie in this life: as long as thou liueſt thou shalt alwaies haue need of ſpiritual armour. Thou liueſt among enemies, and art aſſaulted on al ſides. If therfore thou defendeſt not thy-ſelfe on euerie ſide with the shield of patience, thou canſt not be long vnwounded. Moreouer if thou fixe not thy hart on me with a ſincere wil to ſuffer al things for me, thou canſt not ſuſtaine the heat of this battaile, nor get that victorious crowne which they haue that are in glorie. Thou oughteſt therefore manfully to

goe through al, & to vse a strong hand against whatsoeuer withstandeth thee. For to him that ouercommeth is giuen Manna; and to the negligent is left much woe.

2. If thou seekest rest in this world, how wilt thou then attaine to euerlasting rest? Giue not thy-selfe to much ease, but to much patience. Seeke true peace, not in earth, but in heauen; not in men, nor in any creature, but in God alone. Thou oughtest for the loue of God willingly to vndergoe whatsoeuer labours, to endure whatsoeuer griefes, temptations, anxieties, necessities, infirmities, iniuries, detractions, reprehensions, humiliations, confusions, corrections, and contempts: these help to the attaining of vertue: these try a Nouice of Christ: these make a heauenlie crown. I wil giue an euerlasting reward for a short labour, and infinit glorie for transitorie confusion.

3. Thinkeſt thou, that thou ſhalt alwaies haue ſpiritual conſolations at wil? My Saints had not ſo; but many afflictions, and ſundry temptations, and manie diſcomforts: al which they endured patiently, and truſted rather in God, then in themſelues: knowing that the ſufferings of this time are not condigne to the deſeruing of future glorie. Wilt thou haue that ſtraight waies, which manie after teares, and great labours haue hardly obtainad? Expect the comming of thy Lord, doe manfully, be of good courage: feare not, doe not flye, but offer both body and ſoule for the glorie of God. I wil reward thee in moſt plentiful manner, and I wil be with thee in al thy tribulations.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Againſt the vaine iudgements of men.

SONNE, fixe they hart ſtedfaſtly on God, and feare not the iudgements of men, when thy conſcience giueth teſtimony of thy iuſtice and innocencie. It is a good & a happy thing to ſuffer in that ſort: neither wil it be burdenſome to an humble mind, nor to him that truſteth rather in God, then in himſelfe. The moſt part of men are giuen to talke much, and therfore little care is to be had of their words: neither is it poſſible to ſatisfy al. Though the Apoſtle endeauoured to pleaſe al in our Lord, and made himſelfe al vnto al, yet he little regarded that he was iudged by humane day.

2. He did for the edification and

health of others as much as he could, and lay in him: yet could he not hinder, but that he was somtimes iudged, and despised by others. Therfore he committed al to God, who knew al, and defended himselfe with patience and humilitie against euil tongues, and such as thought vanities and lyes, and spake what they listed: Yet somtimes notwithstanding he answered, lest the weake might haue receaued scandal by his silence.

3. Who art thou, that feareſt a mortal man? To day he is, and to morrow he is not seen. Feare God and the terrour of men shal not trouble thee. What harme can the words or iniuries of any doe thee? He rather hurteth himselfe then thee: neither can he auoyd the iudgements of God, be he what he wil. Haue thou God before thine eyes, and contend not with complayning words. And if for the present thou seemeſt to be troden down, and

to ſuffer ſhame and confuſion without deſert, doe not repine, neither doe thou leſſen thy crowne by thy impatience; but rather lift vp thine eyes to me in heauen. I am able to deliuer thee from ſhame and wrong, and to repay euery one according to their works.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Of a ful, and pure reſignation of our ſelues, for the obtayning free-dome of hart.

SONNE, leaue thy-ſelfe, and thou ſhalt find me. Make choice of nothing, appropriate nothing to thy-ſelfe, & thou ſhalt euer gaine. For greater grace ſhal alwaies be giuē thee, whē thou doſt perfectly reſigne thy-ſelfe, & not turne back to take thy ſelfe againe. Lord, how often ſhal I reſigne my ſelfe? & wherin ſhal I forſake my ſelfe?

Alwaies, and in euerie thing, as well in little as in great. I doe except nothing, but doe require that thou be as it were naked and void of al things. Otherwise, how canst thou be perfectly mine, and I thine, vnlesse both within and without thou be free from al self-will? And how much the sooner thou dost this, so much the better shalt thou find thy selfe, and how much the more fully and sincerely thou dost it, so much the more shalt thou please me, and so much the more shalt thou gaine.

2. Some there are that resigne themselues, but with some exception. For they put not their whole trust in God, and therfore doe labour to prouide for themselues. Some also at the first doe offer al, but afterwards being assailed with temptations, doe returne againe to that which they had left, and therefore they goe not forwards in the way of vertue. These shal not attaine to the true liberty of a pure hart, nor to

the grace of my diuine familiaritie, vnleſſe they firſt make an entiere reſignation and offer themſelues a daily ſacrifice vnto me. For without this can neuer be obtained the vnion with me, wherewith my Saints enioy me.

3. I haue often ſaid vnto thee, and now againe I ſay the ſame: Forſake thy ſelfe, reſigne thy-ſelfe, and thou ſhalt enioy internal peace. Giue al for al; ſeeke nothing, require nothing, repoſe thy-ſelfe purely and with a ful confidence in me, and I wil giue my ſelfe vnto thee, and darkneſs ſhal not couer thee. Let this be thy whole endeauour, let this be thy prayer, let this be thy deſire, that caſting off al propriety, thou maiſt al naked follow thy naked Sauiour Ieſus; & dying to thy-ſelfe, maiſt liue eternally to me. Then ſhal vaine fantaſies, euil perturbations, and al ſuperfluous cares fly away: then ſhal immoderate feare leaue thee, and inordinate loue ſhal dye.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Of good gouernment in outward things: and of recourse to God in dangers.

SONNE, thou oughteſt with al diligence to procure, that in euerie place and action, or external buſineſſe, thou be inwardly free, and maiſter of thy-ſelfe, and that al things be vnder thy diſpoſition, and thou not ſubiect to them; that thou maiſt be Lord and Maiſter of thy actions, not a ſeruant or a hireling, but rather a free-man, and a true Hebrew, belonging to the lot and freedome of the ſonnes of God, who put the things that are preſent vnder their feet, and place their thoughts on that which is eternal: who looke on tranſitorie things with the left eye, and with the right doe behold the things

of heauen: who suffer not themselues to be drawne to cleaue vnto them, but rather dispose and vse them, as they are ordained by God, and appointed by the Creatour of al, who hath left nothing in his creatures without due order.

2. If thou remayne firme and stedfast in al euents, and doest not weigh by the outward apparence, nor with a carnal eye, the things which thou seest and hearest; but presently in euerie occasion doest enter with Moyses into the Tabernacle to aske counsel of our Lord, thou shalt sometimes heare the diuine and celestial oracle, and shalt returne instructed of many things both present and to come. Moyses had alwaies recourse to the Tabernacle for the deciding of al doubts & obscure questions, and fled to the help of praier, for the remedy of the iniquity and dangers of men. So oughtest thou in like manner to fly to the closet of thy hart, earnestly crauing the diuine fauour,

For the Scripture testifieth, that therfore was Iosue and the children of Israel deceaued by the Gabaonites, because they consulted not first with God, but giuing too lightly credit to fayre words, were deluded with counterfaite piety.

CHAP. XXXIX.

That a man be not ouer earnest in his affaires.

SONNE, alwaies commit thy cause to me, I wil dispose wel of it in due time: expect my ordination, and thou shalt find it wil be for thy good. Lord, I doe most willingly commit al vnto thee, for my care can profit little. O that I cleaued not too much to future euents, but offered my selfe with al readinesse of mind to thy diuine pleasure.

2. Some, oftentimes a man doth

earneſtly labour for that which he deſireth, and when he hath gotten it, he beginneth to be of another mind, and not to eſteeme ſo much of it, as before he did: for mans affectiõs doe not long continue fixed on one thing, but doe paſſe from one to another. It is therfore a matter, not of leaſt moment, to forſake ourſelues euen in the leaſt things.

3. The true ſpiritual profit of man, conſiſteth in denying and forſaking of himſelfe: and he that is reſigned, liueth in great freedome and ſecurity. But the ancient enemy, who alwaies laboureth to withſtand the ſeruants of God, omitteth at no time his wonted temptations, but day and night lieth ſtil in waite, to caſt the vnwary, if he can, into the ſnare of deceit. Watch therfore and pray, ſaith our Lord, that you enter not into temptation.

CHAP. XL.

That man hath no good of himselfe nor any thing wherof he can glorie.

LORD, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the sonne of mã, that thou vouchsafest to visit him? What hath man deserued that thou shouldest giue him thy grace? Lord, what cause haue I to complaine, if thou forsake me? Or if thou doest not that which I desire, what can I iustly say against it? Surely, this I may truely thinke & say: Lord, I am nothing, I can doe nothing, I haue nothing that is good of my self, but in all things I doe fayle, and am defectiue, and doe euer tend to nothing: and vnlesse thou help me, and doest interiourly instruct me, I become cold, and am dissolued.

2. But thou, O Lord, art alwaies the same, and endurest for euer; alwaies good, iust, and holie, doing al things wel, iustly, and holily, and disposing al things with wisdome. But I that am more inclined to fal, then to goe forwards, doe neuer continue in one estate: for seauen different tymes are changed ouer me, yet doth it soone turne to the better, when it so pleaseth thee, and when thou vouchsafest to stretch forth thy helping hand. For thou alone canst help me without the fauour of man, and so strengthen me, that my countenance shal be no more changed; but my hart shal be conuerted, and rest in thee alone.

3. Wherfore if I could once perfectly forsake al humane comfort, eyther for the loue of deuotion, or for mine owne necessitie, which inforceth me to seek after thee (for none els can comfort me) then might I wel hope in thy grace, & reioyce in the guift of new

consalation.

4. Thankes be vnto thee, from whence al proceedeth, as often as it goeth wel with me: but I am meer vanitie, and nothing before thee, an vnconstant and weake man. Wherof then can I glorie? Or why doe I desire to be esteemed of? Is it not of nothing? And this is most vaine. Truly vaine glorie is an euil plague and very great vanitie: because it draweth from true glorie, and robbeth the soule of heauenlie grace. For whilst a man pleaseth himselfe, he displeaseth thee: whilst he gapeth after the praise of men, he is depriued of true vertue.

5. But true glorie, and holy exultation, and ioy, is for a man to glorie in thee, & not in himselfe; to reioyce in thy name, and not in his owne vertue, nor to delight in any creature but for thee. Praised be thy name, not mine: magnified be thy worke, not mine. Let thy holy name be for euer blessed, but to

me

me let no part of mens praises be giuen. Thou art my glory, thou art the ioy of my hart. In thee wil I glory and reioyce al the day; but for my selfe I wil not ioy, but in my infirmities.

6. Let the Iewes seeke the glory, which one man giueth to another: I wil desire this, which is from God alone. For al humane glory, al temporal honour, al worldly highnesse, compared to thy eternal glory, is vanity & folly. O my truth, my mercy, my God, most Blessed Trinity, to thee alone be al praise, honour, vertue, and glory for al eternity.

CHAP. XLI.

Of the contempt of al temporal honours.

SOnne, trouble not thy selfe, if thou seest others honoured & aduanced,

and thy-ſelfe contemned and debaſed. Lift vp thy hart vnto me in heauen, and the contempt of men in earth wil not grieue thee. Lord, we are blind, and quickly ſeduced with vanity. If I looke wel into my ſelfe, I cannot ſay, that any creature hath done me wrong; and therfore I cannot iuſtly complaine of thee.

2. But becauſe I haue often and grieuouſly ſinned againſt thee, al creatures doe iuſtly take armes againſt me: for ſhame and contempt is due vnto me, but vnto thee praiſe, honour, & glory. And vnleſſe I doe ſo prepare my-ſelfe; that I be willing, and doe reioyce to be deſpiſed and forſaken of al creatures, and to be eſteemed nothing at al, I cannot obtaine internal ſtrength and peace, nor be ſpiritually enlightned, nor wholy vnited vnto thee.

CHAP. XLII.

That our peace is not to be placed in men.

SOnne, if the peace thou haſt with any, be grounded on the opinion which thou haſt of him, or on the contentment thou receaueſt in his company, thou shalt euer be vneonſtant & ſubiect to diſquiet: but if thou haue recourſe vnto the euer-liuing & eternal Truth, a freind going from thee or dying shal not grieue thee. The loue of thy freind ought to reſt in me; and for me is he to be beloued, whoſoeuer he be, whome thou thinkeſt wel of, and is verily deare vnto thee in this life. No freindship can auaile, or continue without me; neither is the loue true and pure, which they haue, whoſe harts are not ioyned together by

me. Thou oughteſt to be ſo dead to ſuch affections of beloued freinds, that (foraſmuch as appartaineth vnto thee) thou shouldeſt wish to be without al company of men. Man approacheth ſo much the neerer vnto God, by how much the further off he departeth from al earthly comfort: ſo much the higher alſo he aſcendeth vnto God, by how much lower he deſcendeth into himſelfe, and how much the baſer he is in his owne conceit.

2. But he that attributeth any good vnto himſelfe, hindreth the comming of Gods grace into him. For the grace of the holy Ghoſt euer ſeeketh an humble hart. If thou couldſt perfectly anihilate thy-ſelfe, and purge thy-ſelf of al created loue, then should there flow into thee great abundance of my grace. When thou caſteſt thy eyes on creatures, the ſight of thy Creatour is taken from thee. Learne to ouercome thy-ſelfe in al things, for the loue of

thy Creatour; and then shalt thou be able to attaine to heauenly knowledge. How little soeuer it be, if it be inordinately loued and regarded, it defileth the soule, and hindreth the enioying of the chiefest good.

CHAP. XLIII.

Against vaine and secular knowledge.

SOnne, let not the faire speaches, and subtile sayings of men moue thee. For the Kingdome of God consisteth not in words, but in vertue. Obserue wel the words which I speake: for they inflame the hart, and enlighten the mind, induce compunction, and bring sundry comforts. Doe thou neuer read to shew thy-selfe learned or wise: but labour to mortify thy vices; for that wil profit thee more, then the knowledge of many hard and difficult

questions.

2. When thou shalt haue read and knowne many things, thou oughtest euer to returne to one beginning. I am he, that teacheth man al knowledge, and doe giue to litle ones a more cleare vnderstanding, then can be taught by man. He therfore, to whome I speake, shal quickly be wise, and shal profit much in spirit. Woe be to them, that inquire many curious things of men, & doe little desire to know the way how to serue me. The time wil come, when the Maister shal appeare, Christ the Lord of Angels, to heare the lessons of al, that is, to examine the consciences of euery one: and then he wil search Hierusalem with a candle, and the hidden things of darkenesse shal be laid open, and the inuentions of tongues shal be silent.

3. I am he that in an instant doe raise vp the humble mind, to vnderstand more reasons of the euerlasting truth,

then can be gotten by ten yeares ſtudy in ſchools. I teach without noiſe of words, without confuſion of opinions, without ambition of honour, without contention of arguments. I am he that teacheth to deſpiſe earthly things, to loath things preſent, to ſeeke the euerlaſting, to delight in the things that are eternal, to fly honours, to ſuffer ſcādals, to place al hope in me, to deſire nothing out of me, & aboue al things feruently to loue me.

4. For one by louing me entirely, learned diuine things, and ſpake wonders: he profited more in forſaking al things, then in ſtudying ſubtilities. To ſome I ſpeake ordinary things, to others, things more eſpecial; to ſome I appeare ſweetly by ſignes and figures, but to ſome I reueale myſteries with much light. The voice of bocks is one, but it teacheth not al men alike. For I am the internal Theacher, I am the

Truth, the ſearcher of the hart, the vnderſtander of thoughts, the ſetter forwards of good words, diſtributing to euery one according to my wil.

CHAP. XLIIII.

Of not drawing outward things to our ſelues.

SOnne, in many thing thou oughteſt to be ignorant, and eſteeme thyſelfe as dead vpon earth; and as one to whom the whole world is crucified. Thou muſt alſo paſſe ouer many things with a deafe eare, and rather thinke of that, which appertaineth to thy peace. It is more profitable to turne thine eyes from the ſight of vnpleaſing things, and to leaue vnto euery one his owne opinion, then to ſtriue with contentious words. If thou ſtandeſt wel with God, and conſidereſt his iudgements, thou

shalt the more easily yeald to the wil of others.

2. O Lord, to what an estate are we come! Behold, we bewaile a temporal losse, and for a little gaine we toile and spare no labour; and the spiritual domage of our soule is forgotten, & hardly at length called to mind. That which little or nothing profiteth, is alwaies remembred, and that which is chiefly necessary, is negligently passed ouer, because mans nature carrieth him to external things; and vnlesse he quickly returne vnto himselfe, he lieth drowned in them with delight.

CHAP. XLV.

That credit is not to be giuen to al men: and how prone man is to offend in words.

HElp me Lord, in my tribulation, for vaine is the defence of man.

How often haue I been deceaued, finding want of faith, where I thought it sure? And how often haue I found faith, where I leaſt expected it? It is vaine therefore to truſt in men; but the ſafety of the iuſt, O Lord, is in thee. Bleſſed be thou my God, in al things that befal vs. We are weake & inconſtant, quickly deceaued, & ſoone changed.

2. Who is he, that is able ſo warily to keep himſelfe, that he neuer fal into any deceit or doubt? But he that truſteth in thee, O Lord, and ſeeketh with a pure hart, doth not eaſily fal; and if he fal into any tribulation, be he neuer ſo much inthralled, yet he shal quickly be deliuered or conforted by thee. For thou wilt not forſake him for euer that truſteth in thee. A freind is rare to be found, that continueth faithful in his freinds diſtreſſe: but thou, O Lord, thou alone art faithful at al times, and there is none like vnto thee.

3. O how wiſe was that holy ſoule

that ſaid: My mind is firmely ſetled & grounded in Chriſt! If it were ſo with me, then would not humane feare ſo eaſily trouble me, nor words moue me. Who can foreſee al things? Who is able to beware before-hand of future euils? If things euen foreſeen doe oftē-times hurt vs, how can things vnlooked for chooſe but wound vs grieuouſly? But why did *I* not prouide better for my ſelfe, miſerable wretch? Why alſo haue I ſo eaſily giuen credit to others? But alas we are men, & God knoweth, weak & fraile men, although by many we are reputed and called Angels. To whome shal I giue credit Lord? to whome but to thee? Thou art the truth that neither doeſt deceaue, nor canſt be deceaued. And on the other ſide, euery man is a liar, weake, vnconſtant, & ſubiect to fal, eſpecially in words: & therefore we muſt not eaſily giue credit euen to that, which in outward shew ſeemeth at the firſt a certaine truth.

4. O with how great wisdome hast thou warned vs to take heed of men! And because the enemies of man are his familiar and domestical acquaintance, not to trust, if one should say: Behold heer, or behold there. I am taught to my cost, and I would to God I might thereby encrease my care, and not my folly. Be wary, saith one, be wary, keep vnto thy-selfe what I tel thee: & whilst I hold my peace, and think it is secret, he cannot keep that secret, which he desired should be secret, but presently discloseth me and himselfe, and goeth his way. From such tales, & such improuident people, protect me Lord, that I fal not into their hands, nor euer commit such errours. Giue me grace my God to obserue truth and constancy in my words, and remoue farre from me a deceitful tõgue. What I am not willing to suffer, I ought by al meanes to auoid.

5. O how good and quiet a thing it

is to be silent, & not to talke of others, nor to belieue al that is said, nor easily to report what we haue heard; to lay ones selfe open to few; alwaies to seeke after thee, the beholder of the hart; not to be carried about with euery wind of words, but to desire that al things both within and without, be accomplished according to thy wil and pleasure. How secure is it for the keeping of heauenly grace, to fly the sight of men; and not to seeke those things, that seeme to cause admiration abroad, but to follow that with al diligence, which bringeth amendment of life, and encrease of feruour!

6. To how many hath vertue, knowne and ouer hastily commended, been hurtful? How profitable hath grace been, kept with silence in this mortal life, which is nothing but a perpetual temptation, and a warfare?

CHAP. XLVI.

Of putting our truſt in God, when evil words ariſe.

SOnne, be conſtant, and put thy truſt in me. For what are words, but words? They paſſe through the ayre, but hurt not. If thou be guilty, determine willingly to amēd thy-ſelfe: if thou be innocent, reſolue to ſuffer this willingly, at leaſt for God. It is a ſmal matter to ſuffer ſometimes a few words, if thou haſt not yet the courage to endure ſtripes. And why doe ſmal matters goe to thy hart, but for that thou art yet carnal, and regardeſt men more then thou oughteſt? Becauſe thou art afraid to be deſpiſed, therefore thou wilt not be reprehended for thy faults, and thereby ſeekeſt ſhaddowes of excuſes.

2. But looke better into thy-selfe & thou shalt see, that the world yet liueth in thee, and a vaine desire to please men. For when thou refusest to be humbled, and reproued for thy faults, it is surely euident, that thou art neither truly humble, nor dead to the world, nor the world perfectly crucified to thee. But giue diligēt eare to my words, & thou shalt litle respect ten thousand words spoken by men. Behold, if al should be spokē against thee that could be most maliciously inuented, what would it hurt thee, if thou sufferedst it to passe, and madest no reckoning at al of it? could al those words pluck as much as one haire from thy head?

3. But he that hath not his hart within him, nor God before his eyes is easily moued with euery litle dispraysе when as he that trusteth in me, & confideth not in his owne iudgement, shal be free from humane feares. For I am the Iudge and the discerner of al

secrets. I know how the matter passed: I know him that effereth the iniury, & him that suffereth it. From me hath this word proceeded: this hath hapned by my permission; that out of many harts thoughts may be reuealed. I shal iudge the guilty, and the innocent; but by a secret Iudgement I would before-hand try them both.

2. The testimony of men oftentimes deceaueth: my iudgement is alwaies true; it shal stand, and not be ouerthowne. It is commonly hidden and secret, and not known in euery thing, but to few: notwithstanding it neuer erreth, neither can it erre, although to the eyes of the foolish it seemes not right. Men ought therefore to returne to me in euery iudgement, and not to stand in their owne opinions. For the iust man wil not be troubled, whatsoeuer hapneth vnto him for God: & if any thing be wrongfully brought forth against him, he wil not much care, neither

neither wil he vainely be glad, if by others he be with reason excused. For he considereth that I am he that searcheth the hart and reines, and doe iudge not according to the outward face; nor humane apparence. For that is oftētimes found culpable in my sight, that in the iudgement of men is commendable.

5. O Lord my God, the iust Iudge, strong and patient, thou knowest the frailty and peruersity of man; be thou my strength, al my trust, for mine owne conscience sufficeth me not. Thou knowest that which I cānot reach vnto, and therfore in euery reprehension I ought to haue submitted my-selfe, and to haue borne it patiently: vouchsafe mercifully to pardon me, as often as I haue fayled heerin, and giue me againe grace of greater sufferance. For thy bountiful mercy is more auaylable to me for the obtayning of pardon, then my conceaued iustice for the defence

of my hidden conſcience. Although my conſcience accuſe me not, yet I cannot hereby iuſtifie my ſelfe; for if thy mercy be away, no man liuing shal be iuſtified in thy ſight.

CHAP. XLVII.

That al grieuous things are to be endured for life euerlaſting.

SOnne, let not the paynes diſmay thee which thou haſt vndertaken for me, neither be thou diſcomforted for the tribulations which doe befal thee; but let my promiſe ſtrengthen & comfort thee in al euents. I am able to reward thee aboue al meaſure. Thou shalt not long toile here, nor alwaies be oppreſſed with griefe. Attend a while, and thou shalt ſee a ſpeedy end of thy euils. There wil come an houre when al labour & trouble shal ceaſe. Little & short is al that paſſeth away with tyme.

2. Doe as thou doeſt; labour faithfully in my vineyard; I wil be thy reward. Write, read, ſing, mourne, obſerue ſilence, pray, ſuffer croſſes manfully: life euerlaſting is worthy of al theſe and greatter combats. Peace shal come in the day which is knowne vnto our Lord, and it shal not be day nor night, to wit, of this tyme, but euerlaſting light, infinit brightneſſe, ſtedfaſt peace, and ſecure reſt. Then thou shalt not ſay: Who shal deliuer me from the body of this death? nor cry, woe be vnto me, for that my dwelling in a ſtrange countrey is prolonged! For death shal be throwne downe, and health shal be without decay; no anxiety; bleſſed ioy, ſweet and glorious company.

3. O if thou hadſt ſeen the euerlaſting crownes of the Saints in heauen, and with how great glory they now reioyce who in times paſt were contemptible to this world, and eſteemed

vnworthy of life it-selfe; truly thou wouldest presently humble thy-selfe euen vnto the earth: and wouldest rather seeke to be vnder the feet of al, thē to haue command, so much as ouer one: neither wouldst thou desire pleasant dayes of this life, but rather reioyce to be afflicted for God, and esteeme it thy greatest gaine to be reputed as nothing amongst men.

4. O if thou hadst a feeling of these things, and didst suffer them to enter into the depth of thy hart, how durst thou so much as once to complaine? Are not al paineful labours to be endured for euerlasting life? It is no smal matter to loose or to gaine the Kingdome of heauen. Lift vp thine eyes therefore vnto heauen: behold I, and al my Saints with me, who in this world had great conflicts, doe now reioyce, now are comforted, now are secure, now doe rest, & shal remaine with me euerlastingly in the Kingdome of my Father

CHAP. XLVIII.

Of the euerlasting day, and shortnesse of this life.

O Most blessed mansion of the heauenly Citty! O most cleare day of Eternity, which night obscureth not, but the higheſt truth euer enlightneth; day euer pleasant, euer secure, and neuer changing into contrary state! O that that day would once appeare, and al these temporal things were at an end! To the Saints it shineth glistering with euerlasting brightnesse, but to those that are Pilgrimes vpon earth, it appeareth only a far-off, and as it were through a glasse.

2. The inhabitans of heauen doe know how ioyful that day is: but the banished Children of Eue bewaile the bitternes and tediousnes of this. The

dayes of this life are short & euil, ful of sorrow & anguish; where man is defiled with many sinnes, incumbred with many passions, disquieted with many feares, filled with many cares, distracted with many curiosities, intangled with many vanities, compassed about with many errours, worne away with many labours vexed with temptations, weakned with delights, tormented with want.

3. O when shal these euils be at an end! When shal I be deliuered from the miserable bondage of sinne! When shal I thinke, O Lord, of thee alone! When shal I perfectly reioyce in thee! When shal I be free frō al impediments in in true liberty, without al griefe of mind & body! When shal I haue firme peace, peace secure, & without trouble, peace within and without, peace euery way assured! O good Iesu when shal I stand to behold thee! When shal I contemplate the glory of thy Kingdome! When wilt thou be vnto me Al in al

things! O whē shal I be with thee in thy Kindome, which thou hast prepared for thy beloued, from before al worlds! I am left a poore and banished man in the land of mine enemies, where there are daily warres, and great misfortunes.

4 Comfort my banishment, asswage my sorrow; for my whole desire sendeth vp sighes vnto thee. For al is burdensome to me, whatsoeuer this world offereth for my comfort. I desire familiarly to enioy thee, but I cannot atraine vnto it. I would gladly fixe my hart to the things of heauen, but temporal cares & vnmortified passions weigh me down. In mind I would be aboue al things, but to my flesh I am inforced to be subiect against my wil. Thus vnhappy man that I am, I fight against my selfe, and am become grieuous to my-selfe, whilst my spirit seeketh after the things that are aboue, & my flesh that which is below.

5. O what doe I inwardly ſuffer, when in mind I cõſider heauẽly things, and preſently in my prayers a multitude of fleshly fantaſies preſent themſelues before me! My God, be not farre from me, depart not in thy wrath from thy ſeruant. Caſt forth thy lightning, and diſperſe them: ſend out thy darts, & breake al the fantaſies of my enemy. Gather my ſenſes togeather vnto thee, make me forget the things of this world: grant me grace to caſt away ſpeedily the fantaſies of vices. Succour me, o euerlaſting truth, that no vanity may moue me. Come heauenly ſweetneſſe and let al impurity fly from thy face. Pardon me alſo, and mercifully forgiue me as often as I think vpon any thing els beſides thee in prayer. I truly confeſſe, that I am wont to be ſubiect to many diſtractions: for oftentimes I am not there, where I doe corporally ſtand, or ſit, but rather there, whither my thoughts doe carry me. Where my

thought is, there am I: there is oftentimes my thought, where my affection is. That quickly occurreth vnto me, which is naturally delightsome, and by custome pleasing.

6. And for this cause, thou that art truth it-self, hast plainely said: Where thy treasure is, there is also thy hart. If I loue heauen, I willingly think of heauenly things. If I loue the world, I reioyce at the felicity of the world, and grieue for the aduersity therof. If I loue the flesh, I imagine oftentimes those things, that are pleasing to the flesh: if I loue the spirit, I delight to think of spiritual things. For whatsoeuer I loue, thereof doe I willingly speake, and heare, and carry home with me the formes and representations therof. O blessed is that man, that for thee, o Lord, forsaketh al creatures; that violently resisteth nature, and out of the feruour of spirit crucifieth the concupiscences of the flesh: that with

a cleare conſcience he may offer ſincere prayers vnto thee, & be worthy of the company of Angelical quiers, al earthly things outwardly & inwardly being excluded.

CHAP. XLIX.

Of the deſire of euerlaſting life, & how great rewards are promiſed to thoſe that fight valiantly.

SOnne, when thou perceaueſt the deſire of euerlaſting bliſſe to be giuen thee from aboue; and deſireſt to depart out of the Tabernacle of this body, that thou maiſt without shaddow of any interchange behold my light; open thy hart, and receaue this holy inſpiration with thy whole deſire. Giue great thanks to the heauēly goodneſſe, that dealeth with thee ſo fauourably, viſiteth thee mercifully, ſtirreth thee

vp feruently, holdeth thee vp powerfully, leſt through thine owne weight thou fal down to the vanities of the earth. Neither doeſt thou obtaine this by thine owne thought or endeauour, but by the only fauour of heauēly grace & diuine bounty, that thou maiſt profit in vertue, & obtaine greater humility, & prepare thy ſelf to future battailes, & endeauour to cleaue vnto me with the whole affection of thy hart, and ſerue me with a feruent deſire.

3. Sonne, fire often burneth, but the flame aſcendeth not vp without ſmoke: ſo likewiſe the deſires of ſome men are earneſtly carried to heauenly things, and yet they are not free from temptation of carnal affection: and therfore it is not altogeather purely for the honour of God that which they ſo earneſtly requeſt of him. Such is alſo oftentimes thy deſire, which with ſuch importunity thou preſenteſt vnto me. For that is not pure and perfect,

which is infected and defiled with the loue of thine owne proper commodity and interest.

3. Aske not that which is delightsome and profitable to thee, but that which is grateful to me, and appertaineth to my honour, for if thou iudgest aright, thou oughtest to preferre and follow my appointment, rather then thine owne desire, or any desired thing. *I* know thy desire, and haue heard thy often grones. Now thou wouldest be in the freedome of the glory of the Sõnes of God: now doth the euerlasting habitation, and the heauenly Country ful of ioy delight thee, but this houre is not yet come: it is yet another time, to wit, of warre, time of labour and trial. Thou desirest to be filled with the chiefest good, but thou canst not attaine it for the present. *I* am he, saith our Lord, expect vntil the Kingdome of God doth come.

4. Thou art yet to be tryed vpon

earth, & to be exercised in many things. Comfort shal be sometimes giuen thee but aboundant fulnes therof shal not be granted. Take courage therfore, and be constant as wel in doing, as in suffering things cõtrary to nature. Thou oughtest to put on a new man, and to be changed into another. Thou must oftentimes doe that which thou wouldest not, and leaue vndone that thou wouldest doe. That which is pleasing to others, shal goe wel forwards: that which thou wishest, shal not speed. That which others say, shal be nothing regarded. Others shal aske, and shal receaue, thou shalt aske and not obtaine.

5. Others shal be great in the praises of men, but of thee there shal be no speach; to others this or that shal be committed, but thou shalt be accunted fit for nothing. At this nature wil somtimes repine, and it is much if thou endurest it with silence. In these & such like, a faithful seruant of our Lord is

wont to be tryed, how he can deny and ouercome himselfe in al things. There is scarce any thing, wherin thou hast such need to mortify thy-selfe, as in seeing & suffering those things that are cõtrary to thy wil, especially when that is commanded, which seemeth vnto thee inconuenient, or to little purpose. And for that thou being placed vnder authority, darest not resist a higher power, therfore it seemeth hard vnto thee, to walke at the becke of another, & to leaue wholy thine owne opinion.

6. But consider, Sonne, the fruit of these labours, the end neer at hand, & the reward aboue al measure, and thou shalt receaue no griefe therby, but great comfort of thy patience. For in regard of that little of thy wil, which now thou willingly forsakest, thou shalt alwaies haue thy wil in heauen. There thou shalt haue al that thou wilt, or canst desire: there thou shalt enioy al good without feare of loosing it; there

shal thy wil be euer one with me; it shal desire nothing, strange or priuate; there no man shal withstand thee, no man complaine of thee, no man hinder thee, nothing come against thee: but al things desired shal be there togeather present, and delight thy whole desire, and fulfil it to the highest degree: there I wil giue thee glory for the reproach which heere thou sufferedst; a garment of praise for former griefe; for the lowest place, a seat of an euerlasting Kingdome; there shal the fruit of obedience appeare, the labour of pennance reioyce, and humble subiection shal be gloriously crowned.

7. Now therfore bow thy-selfe with great humility vnder the hands of al, & regard not who said, or commanded this; but take great heed, that whether thy Superiour, or thy inferiour, or thine equal require any thing of thee, or doe insinuate their desire, thou take it al in good part, and endeauour

to fulfil it with a sincere intention. Let one seek this, another that; let him glory in this, the other in that, and be praised a thousand thousand times; but doe thou neither reioyce in this, nor in that, but in the contempt of thy selfe, & in my pleasure and honour alone. This art thou to wish, that whether by life or death, God may be alwaies glorified in thee.

CHAP. L.

How a desolate person ought to offer himselfe into the hands of God.

LOrd God, Holy Father, thy holy name be now and for euer blessed; because as thou wilt, so is it done, and what thou doest, is good. Let thy seruant reioyce in thee, not in himselfe, nor any thing els, for thou alone art the true gladnes, thou art my hope & my crown, thou art my ioy & my honour, o Lord,

ô Lord. What hath thy seruant, but what he hath receaued from thee, euen without anie desert of his? Thine is al that thou hast giuen, & whatsoeuer thou hast made. I am poore, and in labours from my youth: and sometimes my soule is heauy euen vnto teares, somtimes also it is troubled in it-selfe, by reason of passions which rise against her.

2. I desire the ioy of peace, I craue the peace of thy children that are fed by thee in the light of comfort. If thou giue peace if thou infuse holie ioy, the soule of thy seruant shal be ful of heauenlie sweetnes, and shal become deuout in thy praise: but if thou withdraw thy-selfe, as verie often thou art wont, he wil not be able to runne the waies of thy commandments, but rather he boweth his knees, and knocketh his breast, for that it is not with him, as it was yesterday; and the day before, when thy light shined vpon his

head, and he was protected vnder the shadow of thy wings, from the temptations which violently assaulted him.

3. O righteous Father, and euer to be prayſed, the houre is come, that thy ſeruant is to be proued! Behold Father, it is fit that in this houre thy ſeruant ſuffer ſomething for thee. O Father worthy of eternal honour, the houre is come, which from al eternitie thou dideſt fore-know should come; that for a short tyme thy ſeruant should outwardly be oppreſſed, but inwardly liue for euer with thee: he should be a little deſpiſed, and humbled, and made as an abiect in the ſight of men, and much afflicted with paſſions and infirmities, that he may riſe againe with thee, in the riſing of new light, and be clarified in heauen. Holie Father, thou haſt ſo appointed it, and wilt haue it ſo: and this is fulfilled which thy-ſelfe haſt commended.

4. It is a grace and a fauour to thy

freind to ſuffer, & to be afflicted in the world for the loue of thee, how often ſoeuer, and by whomſoeuer thou permitteſt it to fal vpon him. Without thy counſel and prouidence, and without cauſe nothing is done in earth. It is good for me, Lord, that thou haſt humbled me, that I may learne thy righteous iudgements, and caſt away al haughtines of hart and preſumption. It is profitable to me, that shame hath couered my face, that I may rather ſeeke to thee for comfort, then to men. I haue learned alſo heerby to dread thy inſcrutable iudgement, that afflicteſt the iuſt with the wicked but not without equity and iuſtice.

5. I giue thee thankes, that thou haſt not ſpared my ſinnes, but haſt worne me away with bitter ſtripes, inflicting ſorrows, and ſending griefe within and without. There is none vnder heauen that can cõfort me, but thou my Lord God, the heauenlie Phiſitian of ſoules,

that ſtrikeſt and healeſt, bringeſt into hel, and draweſt out againe: let thy correction be vpon me, and let thy rod inſtruct me.

6. Behold, beloued Father, I am in thy hands, I bow my ſelfe vnder the rod of thy correction: let my neck and ſhoulders feele the ſtripes of thy chaſtiſement, that my crookedneſſe may be conformed to thy wil. Make me a deuout and humble diſciple of thine, as thou art wont wel to doe, that I may be ready at euerie beck of thy diuine pleaſure. I commend my ſelfe and al mine vnto thee to be corrected. It is better to be rebuked heer, then heerafter. Thou knoweſt al and euerie thing, and there is nothing hidden in the conſcience of man, which can be hidden from thee. Before things are done, thou knoweſt that they wil happen, and haſt no need that any ſhould teach thee, or admonish thee of thoſe things, which are done on earth. Thou knoweſt what

is expedient for my good, & how much tribulation is fit for purging the ruſt of my ſinnes. Doe with me according to thy deſired pleaſure, and de piſe not my ſinful life, better and more clearly knowne to none then to thee alone.

7. Grant me, ô Lord, to know that which is to be known, to loue that which is to be beloued, to praiſe that which pleaſeth thee moſt: to eſteeme that which is precious vnto thee, to deſpiſe that which is contemptible in thy ſight: ſuffer me not to iudge according to the ſight of the exteriour eyes, nor to giue ſentence according to the hearing of the eares of ignorant men; but to determine of viſible and ſpiritual things with a true iudgement, and aboue al things euer to ſearch after thy wil and pleaſure.

8. The ſenſes of men are often deceaued in their iudgements; the louers of the world are alſo deceaued in loving only viſible things. What is a man

the better, for that he is esteemed great by man? The deceitful man deceaueth the deceitful, the vaine the vaine, the blind deceaueth the blind, and one feeble likewise another, whilst he exalteth and praiseth him. For how much euerie one is in thy sight, so much he is, and no more, saith humble S. Francis.

CHAP. LI.

That a man ought to imploy himselfe in workes of Humility, when force is wanting for higher exercises.

SONNE, thou art not able alwaies to continue in the feruent desire of vertue, nor to perfist in the high pitch of contemplation; but thou must sometimes of necessitie by reason of original corruption descend to inferiour things, and beare the burden of this corrupti-

ble life euen againſt thy wil, and with irkſomnes. As thou carrieſt a mortal bodie, thou ſhalt feele trouble and heauines of hart. Thou oughteſt therfore in flesh oftentimes to bewaile the burden of flesh: for that thou canſt not alwaies perſeuer in ſpiritual exerciſes, and diuine contemplation.

2. It is then expedient for thee to fly to humble and exteriour works, and to refresh thy ſelfe with good vertuous actions, to expect with a firme confidence my comming, and heauenlie viſitation, to beare patiently thy banishment, & the drineſſe of thy mind, til thou be viſited againe by me, and deliuered from al anxietie. For, I wil make thee forget thy former paines, and enioy inward quietnes. I wil lay open before thee the pleasant fieldes of holie Scripture, that with an enlarged hart thou maiſt begin to run the way of my commandments. And thou shalt ſay, that the ſufferings of this time

are not condigne to the glorie to come, that shal be reuealed in vs.

CHAP. LII.

That a man ought to esteem himselfe vnworthy of comfort, and to haue deserued stripes.

LORD, I am not worthy of thy comfort, nor of any spiritual visitation, and therfore thou dealest iustly with me, when thou leauest me poore and desolate. For if I could sheed teares like a sea, yet I were not worthy of thy comfort. For (alas) I deserue nothing, but to be scourged and punished, in that I haue grieuously and often offended thee, and sinned in many things. Al things therfore duely considered, I am not worthy euen of the least comfort. But thou mild and merciful God, who wilt not that thy works doe perish,

to shew the riches of thy goodneſſe in the veſſels of mercy, euen beyond his deſert, vouchſafeſt to comfort thy ſeruant aboue humane meaſure. For thy comforts are not like to the vaine words of men.

2. What haue I done, ô Lord, that thou shouldeſt impart any heauenly comfort vnto me? I remember not that I haue euer done any good, but haue been alwaies prone to ſinne, and ſlouthful in my amendment. It is true, & I cannot deny it. If I should ſay otherwiſe, thou wouldeſt ſtand againſt me, and there would be none to defend me. What haue I deſerued for my ſinnes, but hel and euerlaſting fire? I confeſſe in the truth of my hart, that I am worthy of al ſcorne and contempt, and it is vnfit that I should be remembred amongſt thy deuout ſeruants. And although I be vnwilling to heare this, yet notwithſtanding for the loue of truth, I wil lay open my ſinnes againſt my

selfe, that I may the better deserue to obtaine thy mercy.

3. What shal I say being guilty, and ful of confusion? I can vtter out of my mouth no other word, but this; I haue sinned, Lord, I haue sinned, haue mercy on me: pardon me, suffer me a little, that I may bewaile my griefe, before I goe vnto the land of darknesse, and be couered with the shadow of death. What doest thou require of a guilty and miserable sinner, but that he be contrite and sorrowful, and to humble himselfe for his offences? In true contrition and humblenes of hart, is bred a hope of forgiuenes; a troubled conscience is reconciled againe, grace lost is restored, man is defended from future wrath, and God and the penitent soule meet togeather in the holie kisse of peace.

4. Humble contrition for sinnes is an acceptable sacrifice vnto thee, ô Lord, sauouring much sweeter in thy

ſight then burning frankincenſe. This is alſo the pleaſant oyntment, which thou wouldeſt haue powred vpon thy ſacred feet: for thou neuer deſpiſeſt a contrite and humble hart. There is a place of refuge from the face of the wrath of our enemy: there is amended, and washed away whatſoeuer vncleannes hath been elſwhere gathered, and whatſoeuer is defiled.

CHAP. LIII.

That the grace of God is not giuen to thoſe that ſauour of earthly things.

SONNE, my grace is precious, it ſuffereth not itſelfe to be mingled with external things, nor earthly comforts. Thou oughteſt therfore to caſt away al hinderances of grace, if thou deſire to receaue the infuſiō ther-of. Chooſe therfore a ſecret place to thy

ſelfe, loue to liue alone with thy-ſelfe, deſire the conuerſation of none: but rather powre out deuout praiers vnto God, that thou maiſt keep thy mind compunct, and thy conſcience pure. Eſteem the whole world as nothing; preferre my ſeruice before al outward things: for thou canſt not attend vnto me, and be delighted alſo in tranſitorie vanities. Thou oughteſt to ſequeſter thy-ſelfe from thy acquaintance and freinds, and to keep thy mind depriued of al temporal comfort. So the Bleſſed Apoſtle Peter required, that the faithful of Chriſt should keep themſelues as ſtrangers and Pilgrims in this world.

3. O how greate a confidence shal he haue at the houre of death, whome no affection to any earthly thing detaineth in the world. But the weake mind is not yet capable of ſo retired a hart; neither doth the fleshly perſon vnderſtand the freedome of a recollected

mind. Notwithstanding if he wil be truly spiritual, he ought to renounce as wel that which is farre-off, as that which is neereſt vnto him, and to beware of no man more then of himſelfe. If thou perfectly ouercome thy-ſelfe, thou shalt with more eaſe ſubdue the reſt. It is a glorious victorie to triumph ouer our-ſelues. For he that keepeth himſelfe ſubiect in ſuch ſort, that his ſenſuality be ſubdued to reaſon, and reaſon in al things be obedient to me, he is truly a conquerour of himſelfe, and Lord of the world.

3. If thou deſire to mount vnto this height of perfection, thou muſt begin manfully, and ſet the axe to the root, that thou maiſt plucke vp & deſtroy thy hidden and inordinate inclination to thy-ſelfe, and vnto al priuate and earthly good. Of this vice (that man too inordinately loueth himſelfe) almoſt al dependeth, whatſoeuer is wholy to be ouercome: which being

once ouercome and ſubdued, there wil preſently enſue great peace and tranquillitie. But for that few endeauour perfectly to dye vnto themſelues, and to forſake themſelues wholly, therfore they remaine intangled in themſelues, and cannot be lifted vp in ſpirit aboue themſelues; but he that deſireth to walke freely with me, it is neceſſarie that he mortify al his inordinate affections, and not adhere vnto any creature by priuate loue.

CHAP. LIV.

Of the different motions of Nature, and Grace.

SONNE, marke diligently the motions of thine owne nature, and my grace, for in very contrarie and ſecret manner theſe are moued, and can hardly be diſcerned but by him that is ſpi-

ritual and inwardly enlightned. Al men desire that which is good, and pretend some good in al their words & deeds; & therfore vnder pretence of good, many are deceaued. Nature is deceitful and seduceth, intangleth, and deceaueth manie; and alwaies proposeth her selfe for her end; but grace walketh with great sinceritie, and auoideth al shew of euil, pretendeth not deceits, and doth al things purely for God, in whome also she finally resteth.

2. Nature wil not willingly dye, nor be kept in, nor ouercome, nor be subiect to any, nor be subdued: but Grace laboureth to mortify her selfe, resisteth sensuality, seeketh to be subiect, is willing to be ouercome, & wil not vse her owne liberty: she loueth to be kept vnder discipline, and desireth not to rule any, but alwaies to liue and remaine wholy subiect vnto God, and for God is ready humbly to bow vnto al men. Nature striuerh for her owne

commodity, and considereth what profit she may reape by another: but Grace considereth not what is profitable and commodious vnto herselfe, but rather what is profitable to many. Nature willingly receaueth honour and reuerēce: but Grace faithfully attributeth al honour and glorie vnto God.

3. Nature feareth shame and contempt, but grace reioyceth to suffer reproach for the name of Iesus. Nature loueth idlenes, and bodily rest, but Grace cannot be idle, but willingly imbraceth labour. Nature seeketh to haue those things that be curious and precious, abhorreth that which is meane and base: but Grace delighteth in plaine and humble things, despiseth not course and meane, nor refuseth to weare that which is old and torne. Nature respecteth the things of this world, reioyceth at earthly gaine, sorroweth for losse, is moued with euerie little iniurious word; but Grace thinketh on that,

that which is euerlasting, and cleaueth not to that which fadeth with time; she is not troubled with losse, nor exasperated with iniuries, for that she hath placed her treasure and ioy in heauen, where nothing perisheth.

4. Nature is couetous, and doth more willingly receaue then giue; she loueth proper and priuate things: but Grace is pittiful and liberal to al; auoydeth singularity, is content with a litle, thinketh it happier to giue, then to receaue. Nature inclineth to creatures, yealdeth to her owne flesh, followeth vanities, and liſtneth to diſcourſes: but Grace draweth vnto God, and seeketh after vertues, renounceth creatures, flieth the world, hateth desires of the flesh, restraineth wandrings abroad, blusheth to be seen in publike. Nature is willing to haue some outward comfort, wherein she may delight her senses: but Grace seeketh comfort in God alone, and delighteth aboue al visible

things in the higheſt good.

5. Nature worketh al for her owne gaine and profit, she can doe nothing freely, but for beſtowed benefits: she hopeth to obtaine either that which is equal, or better, either praiſe or fauour, and coueteth to haue her workes and guifts much eſteemed: but Grace ſeeketh no temporal thing, nor asketh any other reward for her deſerts then God alone, nor deſireth more of temporal neceſſaries, then what my ſerue her for the obtayning of euerlaſting glorie.

6. Nature reioyceth to haue manie freinds, and kinsfolkes, she glorieth of noble birth and deſcent, pleaſeth the powerful, fawneth vpon the rich applaudeth thoſe that are like herſelfe: but Grace loueth her enemies, and is not puffed vp with multitude of freinds, nor eſteemeth place or birth, but where it is ioyned with greater vertue; she rather fauoureth the poore, then the rich, hath more compaſſion of

the innocent, then the powerful, reioyceth in the ſimple, & reſpecteth not the deceitful, exhorteth euer the good to labour for the better guifts, and by vertue to reſemble the Sonne of God. Nature quickly complaineth of any want and trouble: Grace conſtantly ſuffereth al kind of need.

7. Nature turneth al things to her ſelfe, ſtriueth and contendeth for her ſelfe: but Grace reduceth al to God, from whence originally they proceed: she aſcribeth no good to her ſelfe, neither doth she arrogantly preſume of her ſelfe: she contendeth not, nor preferreth her opinion before others, but in euery ſenſe and vnderſtanding ſubmitteth her ſelfe vnto the eternal wiſdome, and to the diuine iudgement. Nature coueteth to know ſecrets, and to heare newes, she wil appeare abroad, & make proofe of many things by the experiẽce of her owne ſenſes; she deſireth to be knowne, and to doe thoſe

things, for which she may be praised and admired: but Grace careth not for hearing newes, nor to vnderstand curious matters, for that al this springeth from the ancient disorder of our corrupt nature, seeing nothing that is new, is durable vpon earth. She teacheth therfore to restraine the senses, to auoid vaine pleasing and ostentation, humbly to hide those things that are worthy of praise and admiration, and of euerie thing and euerie knowledge to seeke profitable fruit, and the praise and honour of God: she wil not haue her selfe nor hers publickly praised, but desireth that God should be blessed in his guifts, who of meere charity bestoweth al things.

8. This grace is a supernatural light, and a certaine special guift of God, and the proper marke of the elect, and pledge of euerlasting saluation, which lifteth vp a man from earthly baseness to loue things of heauen, &

of a carnal maketh him a ſpiritual perſon. How much the more therfore nature is depreſſed and ſubdued, ſo much the greater grace is infuſed, and the inward man daily by new viſitations more perfected, according to the Image of God.

CHAP. LV.

Of the corruption of Nature, and efficacy of diuine Grace.

MY God, who of thy meer goodnes haſt created me to thy Image and likeneſſe, grant me this grace which thou haſt ſhewed to be ſo great, and ſo neceſſary to ſaluation, that I may ouercome my wicked nature, which draweth me to ſinne, and to the loſſe of my ſoule. For I feele in my flesh the law of ſinne, contradicting the law of my mind, and leading me captiue, to

obey sensuality in many things: neither can I resist the passions therof, vnlesse thy holy grace feruently infused into my hart, doe assist me.

2. Thy grace, ô Lord, and great grace is needful, that nature may be ouercome, which is euer prone to euil from her youth. For by Adam the first man, it falling and being corrupted by sinne, the penalty of this staine hath descended vpon al mankind, in such sort, that nature it-selfe which by thee was created good, and without defect, is now accounted for vice, and for the infirmity of a corrupted nature, for that the motiõ thereof left vnto it-self, draweth to euil and abiect things. For the little force which remaineth, is like a certaine sparke, lying hidden in ashes. This is natural reason it-selfe, compassed about with great darknesse, stil retayning power to discerne good and euil, and the distance betweene true & and false, although it be vnable to ful-

al that it approueth, and enioyeth not now the ful light of truth, nor the former integrity of her affections.

3. Hence it is, my God, that according to my inward man I delight in thy law, knowing thy commandements to be good, iuſt, and holie, reprouing alſo al euil and ſinne, and doe know that it is to be fled. But in my flesh I ſerue the law of ſinne, whilſt I rather obey ſenſuality then reaſon. Hence it is, that I haue a wil to doe good, but know not how to performe it. For this cauſe I often purpoſe manie good things, but for that I want grace to help my infirmity, for a light reſiſtance I goe back, and faint. I know the way of perfection, & ſee cleerly enough what I ought to doe, but preſſed with the weight of mine owne corruption, I riſe not vnto it.

4. O Lord, how needful is thy grace for me, to begin any good worke, to goe forward, and to accom-

plish it. For without it I can doe nothing, but in thee I can doe al things, when thy grace doth comfort me. O heauenly grace, without which our owne merits are nothing, and no guifts of nature are to be esteemed. Arts, riches, beauty, and strength, wit, or eloquence are of no worth with thee, O Lord, without thy grace. For guifts of nature are common to good & euil, but the peculiar guift of the elect is grace and loue, wherwith being marked, they are esteemed worthy of euerlasting life. This grace so much excelleth, that neither the guift of prophecie, nor the working of miracles, nor any speculation, how high soeuer, is of any esteeme without it. Neither faith, nor hope, nor other vertues are acceptable vnto thee without charity and grace.

5. O most blessed grace, that makest the poore in spirit rich with vertues, and the rich in many blessings, humble in hart, come downe vnto me,

replenish me in the morning with thy comfort, leſt my ſoule should faint with wearines, and wither away with drineſſe of mind. I beſeech thee Lord, that I may find grace in thy ſight, for thy grace ſufficeth, though other things that nature deſireth be wanting. If I be tempted and vexed with many tribulations, I wil not feare euils whilſt thy grace is with me: she is my ſtrength, she giueth aduiſe and help, she is ſtronger then al enemies, and wiſer then al the wiſe.

6. Thy grace is the Miſtreſſe of truth, the teacher of diſcipline, the light of the hart, the ſolace in affliction: she drieth away ſorrow, she expelleth feare, she is the nurſe of deuotion, the bringer forth of teares. What am I without it, but a rotten peece of wood, and an vnprofitable ſtalke only meet for the fire? Let thy grace therfore Lord, alwaies preuent me, and follow me, and make me euer diligent in

good works, though Iesus Christ thy Sonne. Amen.

CHAP. LVI.

That we ought to deny our selues, and imitate Christ, by the Crosse.

SONNE, look how much thou canst goe out of thy-selfe, so much maist thou enter into me. As to be void of al desire of external things, maketh inward peace; so the forsaking of our selues ioyneth vs internally to God. I wil haue thee learne the perfect leauing of thy-selfe vnto my wil, without contradiction and complaint. Follow me, I am the way, the truth, and the life. Without the way there is no going, without truth there is no knowledge, without life there is no liuing. I am the way which thou oughtest to follow, the truth which thou

oughteſt to truſt, the life for which thou oughteſt to hope. I am the way which cannot lead amiſſe, the truth which cannot erre, the life which cannot end. I am a moſt ſtrait way, a ſupreme truth, a true life, a bleſſed life, an increated life. If thou remayne in me, thou ſhalt know the truth, and truth ſhal deliuer thee, and thou ſhalt apprehend euerlaſting life.

2. If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandements: if thou wilt know the truth, belieue me. If thou wilt be perfect, ſell al. If thou wilt be my Diſciple, deny thy-ſelfe. If thou wilt poſſeſſe a bleſſed life, deſpiſe this preſent life. If thou wilt be exalted in heauen, humble thy-ſelf vpon earth. If thou wilt raigne with me, beare the croſſe with me. For only the ſeruants of the croſſe find the way of bliſſe and true light.

3. Lord Ieſus, foraſmuch as thy way is narrow, ſtrait and contemptible

vnto the world, grant me grace to imitate thee in suffering willigly al worldly contempt. For the seruant is not greater then his Lord, nor the Disciple aboue his Maister. Let thy seruant be exercised in thy holie life, for there is the health and the true sanctity of my soule: whatsoeuer I read or heare besides, doth not recreate or delight me fully.

4. Sonne, now that thou knowest and hast read these things, happy shalt thou be, if thou fulfil them. He that hath my commandements and keepeth them, he it is that loueth me, and I wil loue him, and wil manifest my selfe vnto him, and wil make him sit with me in the Kingdome of my Father. Lord Iesus, as thou hast said and promised, so giue me grace to deserue, that it be fulfilled. I haue receaued the Crosse, I haue receaued it from thy hand, and I wil beare it, and beare it til death, as thou hast laid it vpon me. Truly the life

of a good religious person is the crosse; and it is a sure guide to heauen. It is now begun, it is not lawful to goe back, neither is it fit to leaue that which I haue vndertaken.

5. Let vs then take courage, my Brethren, and goe forwards togeather. Iesus wil be with vs: for Iesus sake we haue vndertaken this crosse; for the loue of Iesus let vs perseuer in the Crosse. He wil be our helper, who is our guide and fore-runner. Behold our King goeth before vs, who also wil fight for vs: let vs follow him cheerfully, let vs not be dismaied, but be ready to dye with courage in the battaile, and let vs not blemish our glorie by flying from the Crosse.

CHAP. LVII.

That a man be not too much dejected, when he falleth into some defects.

SONNE, patience and humilitie in time of aduersity, are more pleasing to me, then much comfort and deuotion in prosperity. Why art thou grieued for euerie little trifle spoken and done against thee? Although it had been much more, thou ought'est not to haue been moued. But now let it passe, it is not the first that hath happened, nor any new thing, neither shal it be the last, if thou liue long. Thou art cheeful enough, as long as no aduersity occurreth. Thou cāst giue good counsaile also, and canst strengthen others with thy words, but when any tribulation suddainly knocketh al thy

doore, thou art deſtitute of counſel, and voyd of force. See therefore thy great frailty, which thou often proueſt in euerie ſmal occaſiõ. It is notwithſtãding permitted for thy good, when theſe and ſuch like occaſions befal thee.

2. Put it out of thy hart the beſt thou canſt, and if it touch thee, yet let it not deiect thee, nor trouble thee long: beare it at leaſt patiently, if thou canſt not ioyfully. Although thou be vnwilling to heare it and feeleſt in thy hart ſome motion of diſdaine, yet repreſſe thy-ſelfe, and ſuffer no inordinate word to paſſe out of thy mouth, which may be a ſcandal to the weake. The ſtorme which now is raiſed, ſhal quickly be appeaſed, and inward griefe ſhal be aſſwaged by the returne of grace. I doe yet liue, ſaith our Lord, and am ready to help thee, and to giue thee greater comfort then before, if thou put thy truſt in me, and calleſt deuoutly vpon me.

3. Be more patient, and prepare thy selfe to greater suffering. All is not lost, if thou feele thy-selfe often afflicted, or grieuously tempted. Thou art a man, and not God: thou art flesh, not an Angel. How canst thou looke to continue euer in the same state of vertue, when an Angel in heauen hath fallen, and the first man in Paradise lost his standing? I am he that doe giue healthful comfort to them that mourne, and doe raise vp vnto my Godhead those that know their owne frailty.

4. Lord, blessed be thy sacred word, more sweet vnto my mouth then the hony, and the hony-comb. What should I doe in these my so great tribulations and anguish, vnlesse thou didst comfort me with thy holie, sweet, and heauenly speaches? What matter is it, how much, & what I suffer, so as I may at length attaine to the hauen of blisse? Grant me a good end, grant me a happy passage out of this world. Be mind-

ful

ful of me, my God, and direct me the straight and ready way to thy euerlasting Kingdome, Amen.

CHAP. LVIII.

Of not searching into high matters, and into the secret iudgements of God.

SOnne, beware thou dispute not of high matters, nor of the secret iudgements of God, why this man is forsaken, & he assumed to so great grace: why also this man so much afflicted and he so greatly aduanced. These things exceed al humane power, neither can any reasō or discourse of any mā search out the iudgement of God. When the enemy therfore suggesteth these things vnto thee, or some enuious people demand them of thee, answer that of the Prophet: Thou art iust, o Lord, and

thy iudgement is right. And againe: The iudgements of our Lord are true and iuſtified in themſelues. My iudgements are to be feared, not to be diſcuſſed, for they are ſuch as cannot be comprehended by the vnderſtanding of man.

2. In like manner I admiſe thee not to inquire, nor diſpute of the merits of the Saints, which of them is holier then the other, and which is greater in the Kingdome of heauen. Theſe things oftentimes breed ſtrife and vnprofitable contentions: they nourish alſo pride and vaine glory, from whence doe vſually ſpring enuy and diſſenſions, whilſt one wil needs foolishly haue this Saint preferred, & the other, another. To deſire to know and ſearch out ſuch things, is to no purpoſe, but to diſpleaſe the Saints, of whome they ſpeak. For I am not the God of diſſenſion, but of peace, which peace conſiſteth rather in true humility, then in exal-

ting ourſelues.

3. Some are carried with zeale of affection, to loue theſe, or thoſe moſt: but this loue is rather humane then diuine. I haue made al the Saints, and haue giuen them grace: I haue made then partakers of my glory. I know the merits of euery one, I haue preuented them in the benedictions of my ſweetnes. I fore-knew my beloued before the beginning of the world. I choſe them out of the world, they choſe not me firſt. I called them by grace, I drew them by mercy, I led them through ſundry temptations. I haue ſent them great inward comforts, I haue giuen them perſeuerance, I haue crowned their patience.

4. I know the firſt and laſt: I embrace al with ineſtimable loue. I am to be praiſed in al my Saints: I am to be bleſſed aboue al things, & to be honoured in euery one, whom I haue thus glorioufly exalted, and predeſtinated

without any precedent merits of their owne. He therefore that contemneth one of the least of my Saints, honoureth not the greatest; for that I made both the lesse and the greater. And he that dispraiseth any of my Saints, dispraiseth also me, and al the rest in the Kingdome of heauen. Al are one by the band of Charity; they thinke the same, they wil the same, & are al knit togeather in one perfect band of loue.

5. But yet (which is much more high) they loue me more then themselues, and more then their owne merits. For being rauished aboue themselues, and drawne out of the affection of themselues, they tend wholy vnto the loue of me, in which also they rest, enioying me with vnspeakable glory. Nothing can put them back, nothing presse them downe; for being ful of euerlasting truth, they burne with the fire of vnquenchable charity. Let therefore carnal and earthly men, that can

affect no other but priuate ioyes, forbeare to dispute of the state of Saints. They adde and take away according to their owne fancies, not as it pleaseth the euerlasting Truth.

6. There is in many great ignorance, specially in those that be slenderly enlightned, and these can seldome loue any with perfect spiritual loue. They are alwaies much drawn by a natural affection, and humane friendship to this man or to that, and according to the experiéce they haue of themselues in their earthly affections, so they frame an imagination of heauenly things. But there is an incomparable distance between the things, which the imperfect frame in their conceits, and those which illuminated persons doe see by reuelation from aboue.

7. Beware therfore, my Sonne, that thou treat not curiously of these things, which exceed thy knowledge, but rather so apply thy endeauours, that thou

maist at least haue the meanest place in the Kingdome of heauen. And if any one did know which of the Saints exceeded others in sanctity, or is esteemed great in the Kindome of heauen, what would this knowledge auaile him, vnlesse he should thereby humble himselfe the more in my sight, and stirre vp his mind to praise my name with greater feruour. His labour is much more acceptable vnto God, that thinketh of the greatnes of his sinnes, and his want of vertues, and how farre off he is from the perfection of the Saints; then he that disputeth of their greatnes. It is better to pray to the Saints with deuotion and teares, and to creaue their glorious suffrages with an hũble mind, then to search their secrets with vaine curiosity.

8. They are wel, and right wel contented, if men could cõtent themselues and refraine from these vaine discourses. They glory not of their own merits,

for they aſcribe no good vnto themſelues, but attribute al to me, who of my infinit charity haue beſtowed my bleſſings vpon them. They are replenished with ſo great loue of my Godhead, and ſo ſuperaboundant ioy, that there is no glory nor happines, that is, or can be wanting vnto them. Al the Saints how much the higher they be in glory, ſo much the more humble they are in themſelues, and neerer vnto me. And therfore thou haſt it written, That they did caſt their Crownes before God and fel downe vpon their face before the Lamb, and adored him that liueth for euer.

9. Many inquire who is greateſt in the Kingdome of God, that know not whether they shal euer be numbred there amongſt the leaſt. It is no ſmal matter to be euen the leaſt in heauen, where al are great: for that al there shal be called, & shal be indeed the Sonnes of God. The leaſt there shal be great

among thousands, and the sinner of a hundred yeares shal die. For when the Disciples asked who was the greater in the Kingdome of heauen, they receaued this answer: Vnlesse you be conuerted, and become as little children, you shal not enter into the Kingdom of heauen. Whosoeuer therfore shal humble himselfe as this little child, he is the greater in the Kingdome of heauen.

10. Woe be vnto them that disdaine to humble themselues willingly with little children. For the low gate of the Kingdome of heauen, wil not giue them entrance. And woe be to the rich, that haue their cõforts heer, for whilst the poore enter into the Kingdome of God, they shal be wanting without. Reioyce you that be humble: and you that be poore be you glad, for yours is the Kingdome of God, if you walke according vnto truth.

CHAP. LIX.

That al our hope and truſt is to be fixed in God alone.

LORD, what truſt haue I in this world? Or what is the greateſt cõfort, that al things vnder heauen doe yeald me? Is it not thou, my Lord God whoſe mercies are without number? Where hath it been wel with me without thee? Or when could it be il with me, when thou wert preſent? I had rather be poore for thee, then rich without thee. I rather chooſe to be a Pilgrime on earth with thee, then to poſſeſſe heauen without thee. Where thou art, there is heauen: and there is death and hel, where thou art not. Thou art my deſire, and therfore it behoueth me to ſend forth deep ſighes from my hart, and crie and pray vnto thee. For I haue

none to truſt vnto, none that can help me in tyme of neceſſity, but thee alone, my God. Thou art my hope, and my truſt; thou art my comforter, and moſt faithful vnto me in al my diſtreſſes.

2. Al men ſeeke their owne gaine, thou only ſeekeſt my ſaluation and my profit, & turneſt al things to my good. Although thou permitteſt many temptations to aſſault me, and many aduerſities to befal me, yet thou ordeineſt al this to my good and profit, who art wont to proue thy beloued ſeruants a thouſand waies. In which proofe thou oughteſt no leſſe to be loued and prayſed, then if thou dideſt replenish me with heauenly comforts.

3. In thee therefore, my Lord God, I put my whole hope and refuge: in thee I place my tribulation & anguish, for I find al to be weake & vnconſtant, whatſoeuer I behold out of thee. For neither can many freinds auaile, nor

forcile helpers aid, nor wiſe counſelours giue profitable anſwer, nor the books of the learned comfort, nor any wealth deliuer, nor any ſecrets, or pleaſant place defend, if thou thy ſelfe doeſt not aſſiſt, help, comfort, inſtruct, and keep vs.

4. For al things that ſeeme to be ordayned for the reſt and ſolace of man, when thou art abſent, are nothing, and doe bring indeed no ioy, nor comfort at al. Thou therefore art the end of al that is good, the light of life, the depth of wiſdom: and the moſt forcible comfort of thy ſeruants, is to truſt in thee aboue al things. To thee therefore doe I lift vp myne eyes: In thee my God, the Father of mercies, I put my whole truſt. Bleſſe and ſanctify my ſoule with thy heauenly bleſſings, that it may be made thy holy habitation, and the ſeat of thy eternal glory: and that nothing may be found in the Temple of thy greatnes, that may offend

the eyes of thy Maiesty. According to the greatnesse of thy goodnesse, and multitude of thy mercies, take pitty vpon me, and heare the prayer of thy poore seruant, who is farre exiled from thee in the lād of the shaddow of death. Protect, and keep the soule of thy seruant, amidst so many dangers of this corruptible life, and by the assistance of thy grace, direct it in the way of peace, to the country of euerlasting light. Amen.

The end of the third Booke.

OF THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST.

THE FOVRTH BOOK.

A deuout Exhortation vnto the Blessed Sacrament.

The voyce of Christ.

COME vnto me al yee that labour and are burdened, and I wil refresh you, saith our Lord. The bread which I wil giue, is my flesh, for the life of the world. Take yee and eate, this is my body that shal be deliuered for you. Doe this for the commemora-

tion of me. He that eateth my flesh, & drinketh my bloud, remaineth in me, and I in him. The words which I haue spoken vnto you, are spirit and life.

CHAP. I.

With how great reuerence Christ ought to be receaued.

THese are thy words, O Christ, euerlasting Truth, though not spoken al at one time, nor written in one and the selfe-same place. Because therefore they are thine and true, they are al thankfully and faithfully to be receaued by me. They are thine, and thou hast spoken them, and they are mine also, because thou hast spoken them for my saluation. I willingly receaue them from thy mouth, that they may be the deeper imprinted in my hart. These deuout words so ful of sweet

neſſe and loue, doe ſtirre me vp, but mine owne offences doe amaze me, and my impure conſcience driueth me back frō the receauing of ſo great myſteries. The ſweetneſſe of thy words doth encourage me, but the multitude of my ſinnes doe oppreſſe me.

2. Thou cōmandeſt me to come confidētly vnto thee, if I wil haue part with thee: & to receaue the food of immortality, if I deſire to obtaine euerlaſting life & glory. Come, ſaiſt thou, vnto me, al yee that labour & are burdened, and I wil refreſh you. O ſweet & louely word in the eare of a ſinner, that thou my Lord God ſhouldeſt inuite the poore & needy to receaue thy moſt bleſſed bodie. But who am I Lord, that I may preſume to approach vnto thee? behold the heauens cannot containe thee, and thou ſaiſt: Come ye al vnto me.

3. What meaneth this moſt pious benignity, and ſo louing inuitation? How shal I dare to come, that know

not any good in me, wherupon I may presume? How shal I bring thee into my house, that haue often offended thy most gracious countenance? The Angels and the Archangels honour thee, the Saints and iust men doe feare thee, and thou saist: Come ye al vnto me. Vnlesse thou, O Lord, didst say it, who would beleiue it to be true? And vnlesse thou didst cõmand it, who would dare to come vnto thee? Behold Noah a iust man laboured a hundred yeares in the building of the Arke, that he might be saued with a few: and how can I in one houres space prepare myselfe to receaue with reuerence the Maker of the world?

4. Moyses thy great seruant, and especial freind, made an Arke of incorruptible wood, which also he couered with most pure gold, to put the Tables of the Law therein: and I a rotten creature, how shal I so lightly dare to receaue the Maker of the Law, and the giuer

giuer of life? Salomon the wiſeſt of the Kings of Iſrael, beſtowed ſeauen yeares in building a magnificent Temple, in praiſe of thy name, and celebrated the feaſt of the Dedication therof eight daies togeather: he offered a thouſand peaceable ſacrifices, and ſet the Arke in the place prepared for it, with the ſound of trũpets, & of ioy; & I the moſt vnhappy & pooreſt of men, how shal I bring thee into my houſe, that can ſcarce ſpend one halfe houre deuoutly? and I would to God it were once almoſt one halfe houre, in worthy and due manner!

5. O my God, how much did they endeauour to pleaſe thee, and alas how little is that which I doe? How short time doe I ſpend, when *I* prepare myſelfe to receaue: I am ſeldome wholy recollected, very ſeldome altogeather free from diſtraction; and yet ſurely no vndecent thought ſhould occurre in the preſence of thy Deity, nor any crea-

ture draw me vnto it: for I am not to harbour an Angel, but the Lord of Angels.

6. And yet there is great difference between the Arke & the Reliques therof, and thy most pure body with his vnspeakable vertues: between those legal sacrifices, figures of future things, and the true Sacrifice of thy body, the complement of al ancient Sacrifices. Why therfore doe I not become more feruent in thy venerable presence? Wherfore doe I not prepare my-selfe with greater care to receaue thy sacred guift, sith those holy ancient Patriarches, and Prophets, yea Kings also and Princes, with the whole people haue shewed so great zeale of deuotion to thy diuine seruice.

7. The most deuout King Dauid danced before the Arke of God with al his force, calling to mind the benefits bestowed in times past vpon his Forefathers. He made Instruments of sundry kinds, he published Psalmes, and

appointed them to be sung with ioy: himselfe also oftentimes played vpon the harp. Being inspired with the grace of the holy Ghost, he taught the people of Israel to praise God with their whole hart, and with pleasant voices euery day to blesse and praise him. If so great deuotion was then vsed, and such memory of diuine praise before the Arke of the Testament, what reuerence and deuotion is now to be performed by me, and al Christian people in the presence of this Sacrament, in receauing the most precious body of Christ?

8. Many goe to sundry places to visit the Reliques of Saints, and are astonished when they heare of their miraculous works: they behold the spacious buildings of their Churches, and kisse their sacred bones wrapped in silke and gold. And behold thou art heer present with me on the Altar, my God, the Holy of Holies, the Maker of al things, and Lord of Angels. Oftentimes

in thoſe deuotions there is but curioſity of men, and nouelty of the beholders in the ſeeing of ſuch ſights, and little fruit of amendment is gotten thereby, eſpecially where there is ſo vnconſtant wandring without true contrition. But heer in the Sacramēt of the Altar, thou art preſent, my Lord, God and Man, Chriſt Ieſus, where alſo plentiful fruit of euerlaſting ſaluation is obtained, as often as thou art worthily, and deuoutly receaued. No leuity, no curioſity, or ſenſuality draweth vnto this, but firme faith, deuout hope, and ſincere charity.

9. O God the inuiſible Creatour of the world, how wonderfully doeſt thou deale with vs! how ſweetly & graciouſly doeſt thou diſpoſe of al things with thy elect, to whom thou offereſt thy-ſelfe to be receaued in the Sacrament! O this exceedeth al vnderſtanding of mā! This chiefly draweth the harts of the deuout, and inflameth their deſire. For thy true

faithful seruāts that dispose their whole life to amendment, by this most worthy Sacrament, oftentimes receaue great grace of deuotion & loue of vertue.

10. O admirable & hidden grace of this Sacrament, which only the faithful of Christ doe know: but the vnfaithful, & such as are slaues vnto sinne cannot conceaue nor feele. In this Sacrament spiritual grace is giuen, and lost vertue is restored in the soule: and beauty disfigured by sinne, returneth againe. This grace is sometimes so great, that with the fulnesse of deuotion, which is here giuen, not only the mind, but the weake body also feeleth great increase of strength.

11. Our coldnesse and negligence surely is much to be bewailed & pitied, that we are not drawn with greater affection to receaue Christ, in whō al the hope and merit of those that are to be saued doth consist. For he is our sanctification & redemption; he is the com-

fort of passégers, & the euerlasting fruition of Saints. It is much therfore to be lamented that many doe so litle consider this comfortable mysterie, which reioyceth heauen, and preserueth the whole world. O blindnes and hardnes of mans hart, that doth not more deeply weigh the greatnes of so vnspeakable a guift, but rather comes by the daily vse therof, to regard it little or nothing.

12. For if this most holy Sacrament should be celebrated in one place only, and consecrated by one only Priest in the world; with how great desire doest thou thinke would men be affected to that place, and what esteeme would they haue of such a Priest of Almighty God, by whom they might enioy the consolation of these diuine mysteries? But now there are many Priests, & Christ is offered vp in many places, that so the grace and loue of God to man may appeare so much the

greater, how much the more this sacred Communion is common through the world. Thāks be vnto thee, good Iesu, euerlasting Pastour of our souls, that hast vouchsafed to refresh vs poore and banished men, with thy precious Body and Bloud, and to inuite vs to the receauing of these mysteries with the words of thy owne mouth, saying: Come vnto me al ye that labour and are burdened, and I wil refresh you.

CHAP. II.

That great goodnesse and charity of God is bestowed vpon man, in this Sacrament.

The voice of the Disciple.

PResuming of thy goodnesse & great mercy, ô Lord, being sick, I approach vnto my Sauiour, hungry and thirsty

to the fountaine of life, needy to the King of heauen, a ſeruāt vnto my Lord, a creature to my Creatour, deſolate to my merciful comforter. But whence is this to me, that thou vouchſafeſt to come vnto me? Who am *I* that thou ſhouldeſt giue thy-ſelfe vnto me? How dare a ſinner preſume to appeare before thee? And thou, how doeſt thou vouchſafe to come vnto a ſinner? Thou knoweſt thy ſeruant, and ſeeſt that he hath no good thing in him, for which thou ſhouldeſt beſtow this benefit vpon him. I confeſſe therefore my vnworthineſſe, and I acknowlege thy goodneſſe; I praiſe thy mercy, & giue thee thanks for this thy vnſpeakable charity. For thou doeſt this for thine owne goodneſſe, not for any merits of mine, to the end that thy goodneſſe may be better known vnto me, thy charity more aboundantly shewed, and thy humility more highly commended. Since therfore it is thy pleaſure, and thou

haſt commanded that it should be ſo, this thy bounty is alſo pleaſing to me, and I doe wish that my offences may be no hinderance.

2. O moſt ſweet and bountiful Ieſu, how great reuerence and thanks, with perpetual praiſe is due vnto thee for the receauing of thy ſacred body, whoſe worth and dignity no man is able to expreſſe! But what shal I thinke of at this time, now that I am to receaue this diuine Sacrament, and to approach vnto my Lord, to whom *I* am not able to giue due reuerence, and yet I deſire to receaue him deuoutly? What can I think better, and more profitable, then to humble my ſelfe wholy before thee, and to exalt thy infinit goodneſſe aboue me? I praiſe thee my God, and wil exalt thee for euer: and I doe deſpiſe, and ſubmit my ſelfe vnto thee, euen into the depth of my vnworthineſſe.

3. Behold thou art the Holy of

Holies, and I the skum of sinners! behold thou boweſt thy-ſelfe downe vnto me, who am not worthy ſo much as to looke vp vnto thee. Behold thou commeſt vnto me! it is thy wil to be with me, thou inuiteſt me to thy banquet. Thou wilt giue me the food of heauen, and bread of Angels to eate, which is no other truely then thy-ſelf, the liuely bread, that deſcendeſt from heauen, & giueſt life vnto the world.

4. Behold from whence this loue proceedeth! what kind of fauour and benignity is this which shineth vpon vs! What thankes and praiſes are due vnto thee for theſe benefits. O how good and profitable was thy counſel, when thou ordainedſt it! How ſweet and pleaſant the banquet when thou gaueſt thy ſelfe to be our food! How wonderful thy worke, ô Lord, how powerful thy vertue, how vnſpeakable thy truth! For thou ſaidſt the word, & al things were made; and this was done

which thou commandeſt.

5. A thing of great admiration, and worthy of faith, and ſurpaſſing the vnderſtanding of man, that thou, my Lord God, true God and Man, shouldeſt be wholy conteyned vnder a ſmal forme of bread and wine, & shouldeſt be eaten by the receauer without being conſumed. Thou who art the Lord of al things, and ſtandeſt in need of none, haſt pleaſed to dwel in vs by meanes of this thy Sacrament: preſerue my hart and body vnſpotted, that with a cheerful and pure conſcience I may often celebrate thy myſteries, and receaue them to my euerlaſting health, which thou haſt chiefly ordained and inſtituted for thy honour, and perpetual memory.

6. Reioyce my ſoule, & giue thanks vnto God for ſo noble a guift, and ſingular comfort left vnto thee in this vale of teares. For as often as thou calledſt to mind this myſterie, and receaueſt

the body of Christ; so often dost thou worke the worke of thy redemption, and art made partaker of the merits of Christ. For the charity of Christ is neuer diminished, and the greatnesse of his mercy is neuer lessened. Therefore thou oughtest alwaies to dispose thyselfe herevnto by a fresh renewing of thy mind, and to weigh with attentiue consideration this great mistery of thy saluation. So great, new, and ioyful it ought to seeme vnto thee, when thou sayest, or heareſt Masse, as if the same day Christ first descending into the womb of the Virgin, were become man; or hanging on the crosse, did suffer and dye for the saluation of mankind.

CHAP. III.

That it is profitable to communicate often.

BEhold, O Lord, I come vnto thee, that I may be comforted in thy guift, & be delighted in thy holy banquet, which thou, O Lord, haſt prepared in thy ſweetneſſe, for the poore. Behold in thee is al whatſoeuer I can, or ought to deſire: thou art my health, and my redemption, my hope, and my ſtrength, my honour, and my glory. Make ioyful therefore this day, the ſoule of thy ſeruant, for that I haue lifted it vp to thee my ſweet Ieſus. I deſire to receaue thee now with deuotion, and reuerence. I doe long to bring thee into my houſe, that with Zachæus I may deſerue to be bleſſed by thee, and numbred amongſt the children of A-

braham. My ſoule thirſteth to receaue thy body, my hart deſireth to be vnited with thee.

2. Giue thy-ſelfe to me, and it ſufficeth. For beſides thee no comfort is auailable. I cannot be without thee, nor liue without thy viſitation. And therefore I muſt often come vnto thee, and receaue thee as the only remedy of my health, leſt perhaps I faint in the way, if I be depriued of thy heauenly food. For ſo, moſt merciful Ieſus, thou once didſt ſay, preaching to the people, and curing ſundry diſeaſes: I wil not ſend them home faſting, leſt they faint in the way. Deale thou therfore in like manner now with me, who haſt vouchſafed to leaue thy-ſelfe in the Sacrament for the comfort of the faithful. For thou art the ſweet refection of the ſoule, and he that eateth thee worthily, ſhal be partaker, and heire of euerlaſting glory. It is neceſſary for me, that doe ſo often fal and ſinne, ſo

quickly wax dul & faint, that by often prayers and confeſſion, and receauing of thy ſacred body, I renew, cleanſe, and inflame my-ſelfe; leſt perhaps by long abſtaining I fal from my holy purpoſe.

3. For man is prone vnto euil from his youth, and vnleſſe this diuine remedy help him, he quickly ſlideth to worſe. This holy Communion therfore draweth back from euil, and comforteth in good. For if I be now ſo often ſlack and negligent when I communicate, or ſay Maſſe, what would become of me, if I receaued not this remedy, and ſought not after ſo great a help? Though euery day I be not fit, nor wel prepared to ſay Maſſe, I wil endeauour notwithſtanding at conuenient times to receaue the diuine myſteries, & make my-ſelfe partaker of ſo great a grace. For this is the only chiefe comfort of a faithful ſoule, whilſt ſhe wandreth from thee in this mortal

body, that being mindful of her God, she often receaue her Beloued with a deuout mind.

4. O wonderful benignity of thy mercy towards vs, that thou, Lord God, the Creatour and giuer of life to al spirits, doest vouchsafe to come vnto a poore soule, & with thy whole Godhead and Humanity to replenish her hunger. O happy mind, and blessed soule, that deserueth to receaue thee, her Lord God, with deuout affection, and in receauing of thee to be filled with spiritual ioy! O how great a Lord doth she entertain! How beloued a gheſt doth she harbour! how pleasant a companion doth she receaue! how faithful a freind doth she accept! how beautiful and noble a spouse doth she embrace! She embraceth him who is to be loued aboue al that is beloued, and aboue al things that may be desired. Let heauen and earth and al their beauty be silent in thy presence. For what beauty and

praise

praise soeuer they haue, it is receaued from thy bounty, and shal not equal the beauty of thy name, of whose wisdome there is no end.

CHAP. IIII.

That many benefits are bestowed vpon them that communicate deuoutly.

The voice of the Disciple.

MY Lord God, preuent thy seruãt in the blessings of thy sweetnesse, that I may deserue to approach worthily and deuoutly to thy holie Sacrament: stirre vp my hart vnto thee, and deliuer me from al heauines and slouth: visit me with thy comfort, that I may tast in spirit thy sweetnesse, which plentifully lyeth hid in this Sa-

crament, as a fountaine. Giue light also to my eyes to behold so great a mysterie, and strengthen me to belieue it with vndoubted faith. For it is thy worke, and not man's power, thy sacred institution, not man's inuention. For no man is of himselfe able to comprehend and vnderstand the se things, which surpasse the vnderstanding euen of Angels. What therfore shal I vnworthy sinner, dust and ashes, be able to search and comprehend of so high and sacred a mysterie?

2. O Lord in sincerity of hart, with a good and firme faith, and at thy commandement, I come vnto thee with hope and reuerence, and doe verily belieue, that thou art heer present in the Sacrament, God and Man. Thy holie pleasure is, that I receaue thee, and by charity doe vnite my self vnto thee. Wherfore I doe recurre vnto thy Clemencie, and doe craue special grace, that I may wholy melt in thee, and a-

bound with loue, and heerafter neuer admit any external comfort. For this moſt high and worthy Sacrament is the health of the ſoule and bodie, the remedy of al ſpiritual ſicknes: by it my vices are cured, my paſſions bridled, temptations ouercome or weakned, greater grace infuſed, vertue increaſed, faith confirmed, hope ſtrengthned, and charity inflamed and enlarged.

3. For thou haſt beſtowed, and ſtil oftentimes doeſt beſtow many benefits in this Sacrament vpon thy beloued that receaue it deuoutly, my God the Protectour of my ſoule, the ſtrengthner of humane frailty, and the giuer of al inward comfort. Thou impartest vnto them much comfort againſt ſundry tribulations, and liftest them vp from the depth of their owne baſenes, to the hope of thy protection, and doeſt inwardly refresh and illuſtrate them with a certaine new grace, in ſuch ſort, that they who before Communion felt

themselues heauy and indisposed, afterwards being strengthned with heauenlie meat and drinke, doe find in themselues a great change to the better. Which thou doest so dispose to thy elect, that they may truly acknowledge, and patiently proue, how great their owne infirmity is, and what benefit and grace they receaue from thee. For they of themselues are cold, dul, and vndeuout; but by thee they are made feruent, quick, and ful of deuotion. For who is there, that approaching humbly vnto the fountaine of sweetnesse, doth not carry away from thence at least some little sweetnesse? Or who standing by a great fire, receaueth not some smal heat therby? Thou art a fountaine alwaies ful and ouerflowing, a fire euer burning and neuer decaying.

4. Wherfore if I cannot draw at the ful out of this fountaine, nor drinke my fil, I wil notwithstanding set my lips

to the mouth of this heauenlie conduit, that I may draw from thence at leaſt ſome ſmal drop to refresh my thirſt; to the end I wither not wholy away and perish. And though I be not altogeather celeſtial, nor ſo inflamed as the Cherubins & Seraphins, notwithſtanding I wil endeauour to apply my-ſelfe to deuotion, and diſpoſe my hart to obtaine ſome ſmal ſparke of diuine fire by humble receauing of this life-giuing Sacrament. And whatſoeuer is hereunto wanting in me, good Ieſu, moſt Bleſſed Sauiour, doe thou ſupply for me, moſt benigne and gratious Lord, who haſt vouchſafed to cal vs vnto thee, ſaying: Come vnto me al yee that labour and are burdned, and I wil refresh you.

5. I labour in the ſweat of my browes, I am vexed with griefe of hart, I am burdned with ſinnes, I am troubled with temptations, I am intangled and oppreſſed with manie euil paſſions, and

there is none to help me, none to deliuer and saue me, but thou, O Lord, my Sauiour, to whome I commit my selfe, and al mine, that thou maist keep me, and bring me to life euerlasting. Receaue me to the honour and glorie of thy name, who hast prepared thy Body and Bloud to be my meat & my drink. I Grant, Lord God, my Sauiour, that by frequenting thy misteries, my zeale and deuotion may increase.

CHAP. V.

Of the dignity of this Sacrament, and Priestly function.

The veyce of the Disciple.

IF thou hadst angelical purity, and the sanctity of S. Iohn Baptist, thou wert not worthy to receaue, nor handle

this Sacrament. For it is not within the compasse of the deserts of men, that man should consecrate & handle the Sacrament of Christ, and receaue for food the bread of Angels. A great mysterie, and great is the dignity of Priests, to whome is granted that which is not permitted to the Angels. For Priests only instituted in the Church, haue power to celebrate, and consecrate the bodie of Christ. The Priest is the Minister of God, vsing the wordes of God, by God's commandement and appointmēt, but God is there the principal Authour, and inuisible Worker, to whome is subiect al that he pleaseth, and al that he commandeth, doth obey.

2. Thou oughtest therefore to giue more credit to God Almighty in this most excellent Sacramēt, then to thine owne sēse, or to any visible signe. And therfore thou art to come vnto this Mysterie with feare and reuerence. Cōsider

attentiuely with thy-selfe, what that is, wherof the Ministry is deliuered vnto thee by the impoſition of hands of the Bishop. Behold thou art made a Prieſt, and conſecrated to ſay Maſſe: ſee now that in due time thou offer Sacrifice vnto God faithfully and deuoutly, and carry thy ſelfe ſo, as thou maiſt be without reproofe. Thou haſt not lightned thy burden, but art now bound with a ſtraiter band of diſcipline, and art obliged to a more perfect degree of ſanctity. A Prieſt ought to be adorned with al kind of vertue, and to giue example of good life to others. His conuerſation should not be according to the ordinarie and common proceedings of men, but like to the Angels in heauen, or to perfect men on earth.

3. A Prieſt clothed in ſacred garments is the Vicegerent of Chriſt, to pray humbly, and with a proſtrate mind vnto God for himſelfe and the whole people. He hath before, and be-

hi .d the ſigne of the Croſſe of our Lord, to the end he may euer remember the Paſſion of Chriſt: he beareth the Croſſe before him in the Veſtmēt, that he may diligētly behold the foot ſteps of Chriſt, & feruently endeauour to follow them. He is behind marked with the croſſe, that he may patiently ſuffer for God whatſoeuer aduerſities shal be layd vpō him by others. He beareth the croſſe before, that he may lament his owne ſinnes: and the ſame he hath alſo behind, that he may with a compaſſionate hart bewaile the offences of others, and know that he is placed as a mediatour between God and the ſinner. Neither ought he to ceaſe from praier and holie oblatiō, til he deſerue to obtaine grace and mercy. When a Prieſt doth celebrate, he honoureth God, reioyceth the Angels, edifieth the Church, helpeth the liuing, giueth reſt to the dead, and maketh himſelfe partaker of al good deeds.

CHAP. VI.

An Interrogation of the exercise before Communion.

The voyce of the Disciple.

WHEN I weigh thy greatnesse, O Lord, and my vnworthinesse, I tremble, and am confounded in my selfe. For if I come not vnto thee, I fly from life; and if I vnworthily intrude my selfe. I incurre thy displeasure. What therfore shal I doe, my God, my helper, and my counsellour in necessity?

2. Teach me the right way, appoint me some brief exercise sutable to this holy mysterie of sacred Cõmunion. For it is good for me to know, how I should reuerently and deuoutly pre-

pare my hart vnto thee, for the profitable receauing of thy Sacrament, or for the celebrating of so great and diuine a Sacrifice.

CHAP. VII.

Of the discussing of our owne conscience, and purpose of amendment.

The voice of the Beloued.

ABOVE al things, the Priest of God ought to come to celebrate, handle, and receaue this Sacrament with great humility of hart, and lowly reuerence, with a ful faith, and a Godly desire of the honour of the diuine Maiestie. Examine diligently thy conscience, and to thy power purge and clense it with true contrition, & lũble

confession: so as there may be nothing in thee, that may be burdensome vnto thee, or that may breed in thee remorse of conscience, and hinder thy free accesse to these heauenlie mysteries. Repent thee of al thy sinnes in general and in particular bewaile thy daily offences. And if thou hast time, confesse vnto God in the secret of thy hart, al the miseries of thy disordered passions.

2. Lament and grieue, that thou art yet so subiect to sensuality, and so addicted to the world, so vnmortified in thy passions, so ful of the motions of concupiscence, so vnwatchful ouer thy outward senses, so often intangled with many vaine fantasies, so vehemently inclined to outward things, so negligent in the interiour, so prone to laughter and immodesty, so hard to teares and compunction, so prompt to ease and pleasures of the flesh, so dul to austeritie and feruour, so curious to heare newes and see vaine sights, so

slack to imbrace that which tends to thine own humiliation and contempt, so couetous of aboundance, so niggardly in giuing, so fast in keeping, so inconsiderate in speach, so vnbridled to silence, so loose in manners, so outragious in deeds, so greedy to meat, so deafe to the word of God, so hasty to rest, so slow to labour, so watchful to tales, so drowsy to watch in the seruice of God, so hasty to the end therof, so inconstant in attention, so negligent in saying thy office, so vndeuout in saying Masse, so dry in receauing, so quickly distracted, so seldome wholy recollected, so suddainly moued to anger, so apt to take displeasure against another, so prone to iudge, so seuere to reprehend, so ioyful in prosperity, so weake in aduersity, so often purposing much good, and performing little.

3. These and other thy defects confessed, and bewailed with sorrow, and great dislike of thine owne infirmity,

make a firme purpose alwaies to amēd thy-self, and to goe forwards in vertue. Then with ful resignation, & with thy whole wil offer thy self vp to the honour of my name; a perpetual sacrifice in the altar of thy hart, faithfully committing thy bodie and soule vnto me, that thou maist so also deserue to come worthily to offer sacrifice vnto God, & to receaue profitably the Sacrament of my bodie.

4. For there is no oblation more worthy, nor satisfaction greater, for the washing away of sinnes, then, to offer vp ourselues vnto God purely and wholy with the oblation of the Bodie of Christ in the Masse, and in Communion. And when a man shal haue done what lieth in him, and shal be truly penitent, I liue, saith our Lord, who wil not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be conuerted & liue: I wil not remember his sinnes any more, but they shal be al forgiuen him, and fully pardoned.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the oblation of Christ on the Crosse, & resignation of our selues.

The voice of the Beloued.

AS I willingly offerred vp my selfe vnto God my Father, with my hands stretched forth on the Crosse, & my bodie naked for thy sinnes, so that nothing remained in me that was not turned into a sacrifice, for the appeasing of the diuine wrath, so oughtest thou also to offer vp thy selfe willingly vnto me daily in the Masse, as a pure and holy oblation, with thy whole force and desire, in as hearty a manner as thou canst. What more I require of thee more, then that thou resigne thy-selfe wholy vnto me? Whatsoeuer thou giuest

beſides thy-ſelf, is of little accoũt in my ſight, for I ſeeke not thy guift, but thee.

2. As it would not ſuffice thee to haue al things whatſoeuer beſides me; ſo neither can it pleaſe me whatſoeuer thou giueſt, if thou offereſt not vp thy ſelfe. Offer thy-ſelfe vnto me, and giue thy-ſelfe, al that thou art for God, and thy offering shal be grateful. Behold I offered vp my ſelfe wholy vnto my Father for thee, and gaue my whole body, and bloud for thy food, that I might be wholy thine, and thou remaine mine. But if thou abideſt in thy ſelfe, and doeſt not offer thy-ſelfe vp freely vnto my wil; thy oblation is not entiere, neither shal the vnion between vs be perfect. Therefore a free offering vp of thy-ſelfe into the hands of God, ought to goe before al thy actions, if thou wilt obtaine freedome and grace. For this cauſe ſo few become inwardly illuminated, and enioy true liberty of hart, for that they doe not reſolue wholy

wholy to deny themselues. My saying is vndoubtedly true: Vnlesse one forsake al, he cannot be my Disciple. If thou therfore wish to be mine, offer vp thy-selfe vnto me with thy whole desires.

CHAP. IX.

That we ought to offer vp our selues, and al that is ours vnto God, and to pray for al.

The voice of the Disciple.

THOV, O Lord, are al things that are in heauen, and in earth. I desire to offer vp my selfe vnto thee, as a free oblation, and to remaine alwaies thine. O Lord, in sincerity of my hart I offer my selfe vnto thee this day, in sacrifice of perpetual praise, to be thy

seruant for euer. Receaue me with this holy oblation of thy precious body, which in the presence of the Angels inuisibly attending heer vpon thee, I offer vp this day vnto thee, that it may be to the health of my soule, and the saluation of al thy people.

2. I offer vnto thee, O Lord, al my sinnes and offences, which I haue committed in the sight of thee, and of thy holy Angels, from the day wherin I first could sinne, to this houre, vpon thy holy altar: that thou maist cõsume and burne them al with the fire of thy charity, and wash out al the staines of my sinnes, and cleanse my conscience from al offence, & restore to me againe thy grace, which I lost by sinne, forgiuing me al my offences, and receauing me mercifully in the kisse of peace.

2. What can I doe for my sinnes, but humbly confesse and bewaile them, and intreat alwaies for mercie without intermission? I beseech thee, heare

me in thy aboundant mercie, when I ſtand before thee my God. Al my ſinnes are very diſpleaſing vnto me. I wil neuer commit them any more; but I am ſory, and wil be ſory for them as long as I liue, and am ready to doe pennance, and to ſatisfy for them to the vtter-moſt of my power. Forgiue me, ô God, forgiue me my ſinnes for thy holy names ſake: ſaue my ſoule which thou haſt redeemed with thy precious Bloud. Behold I commit my ſelfe vnto thy mercie, I reſigne my ſelfe ouer into thy hands. Doe with me according to thy goodneſſe, not according to my wickednes, and manifold iniquity.

4. I offer vp alſo vnto thee al whatſoeuer is good in me, although it be very little and imperfect, that thou maiſt amend and ſanctify it, that thou maiſt make it grateful and acceptable vnto thee, and alwaies perfect more and more that which thou haſt

begun, and bring me also, who am the slouthful and vnprofitable creature, to a good and blessed end.

5. I offer vp also vnto thee al the Godly desires of deuout persons, the necessities of my parents and freinds, my brethren and sisters, and of al those that are deare vnto me, and that haue done good either to my selfe or to others for thy loue, and that haue desired me to say Masse, and pray for them; and al others, whether they be yet aliue, or already dead: that they al may receaue the help of thy grace and comfort, protection from dangers, deliuery from paine, and being freed from al euils, may ioyfully giue worthy thankes to thee.

6. I offer vp also vnto thee my prayers, and sacrifices, especially for them who haue in any thing wronged, grieued, or slandered me, or haue done me any domage or displeasure; and for those also, whome I haue at any time

grieued, troubled, and scandalized by words, or deeds, wittingly, or at vnawares: that it may please thee to forgiue vs al our sinnes, and offences, one against the other. Take, O Lord, from our hart al iealousy, and indignation, wrath, and contention, and whatsoeuer may hurt Charity, and weaken brotherly loue. Haue mercie, O Lord, haue mercie on those that craue thy mercie: giue grace vnto them, that stād in need therof, & grant that we may be worthy to enioy thy grace, and attaine to life euerlasting, Amen.

CHAP. X.

That the holy Communion is not lightly to be forborne.

The voice of the Beloued.

THOV oughtest often to haue recourse to the Fountaine of grace, and of diuine mercie, to the Fountaine of goodnesse, and of al piety, that thou maist be cured of thy sinnes and passions, and deserue to be made more strong and vigilant against al temptations and deceits of the Diuel: The enemy knowing the greatest profit, and remedy to consist in the holy Communion, endeauoureth by al meanes and occasions to withdraw and hinder faithful and deuout persons from it.

2. Some when they purpose to re-

ceaue the ſacred Communion, ſuffer greateſt aſſaults of the Diuel. For that wicked ſpirit (as is written in Iob) commeth amongſt the Sonnes of God, to trouble them with his accuſtomed malice and impiety, or to make them ouer fearful and perplexed, that ſo he may diminish their affection, or by ſubtile aſſaults, take away their faith, to the end they may either altogeather abſtaine from this diuine food, or at leaſt come vnto it with leſſe deuotion. But there is no heed to be taken of his frauds and malicious ſuggeſtions, be they neuer ſo filthy and hideous, but alis to be turned back vpon his owne head. We ought to contemne and ſcorne him, miſerable wretch, and not to omit the ſacred communion for his aſſaults, and the troubles which he raiſeth.

3. Oftentimes alſo an exceſſiue care for the obtaining of deuotion, and a certaine anxietie for the making of our Confeſſion hindreth vs. Follow

in these occasions the counsel of the wise, and put away al anxiety and scruple; for it hindreth the grace of God, and ouerthroweth deuotion. Omit not for euerie smal vexation of the mind which happeneth, to receaue this holy Sacrament, but goe presently to confession, and willingly forgiue others, whatsoeuer offences they haue done against thee: and if thou hast offended any, humbly craue pardon, and God wil willingly forgiue thee.

4. What auaileth it to delay confession, & to deferre receauing? Purge thy-selfe with speed, spit out the venome presently, make hast to take a remedy, and thou shalt find it better, then if thou deferredst it long. If thou omittest it to day for this cause, perhaps to morrow some greater wil fal out, and so thou maist be hindred a long time from these diuine mysteries, and become more vnfit. Stirre vp thy-selfe, and shake off al heauinesse and slouth

with the greateſt force and ſpeed thou canſt. For it profiteth nothing to continue long in diſquietnes and trouble of mind, and for daily occurring impediments to withdraw thy ſelfe from the Sacraments. Yea it hurteth very much to deferre Communion long, for it is wont to bread a great and dangerous dulneſſe. Alas, ſome cold and diſſolute people, doe willingly delay their confeſſion, and doe therfore deferre the ſacred Communion, leſt they ſhould be bound to greater watch ouer themſelues.

6. O how little charity and weak deuotion haue they that ſo eaſily omit the receauing of theſe holie myſteries! How happy is he and grateful to God, who ordereth ſo his life, and keepeth his conſcience in ſuch purity, that he may be ready and fit to communicate euerie day, if it were conuenient and might be done without note. If anie one ſometimes abſtayne of humility,

or by reason of some lawful impediment, he is to be commended for the reuerence which therin he sheweth. But if it proceedeth of coldnesse, he must stirre himselfe vp, and doe what lieth in him, and God wil prosper his desire, for the good wil he hath to doe it, which God doth chiefly respect.

6. And when any lawful hindrance doth happen, he must alwaies haue yet a good wil, and louing desire to communicate, and so shal he not loose the fruit of the Sacrament. For a deuout person may euerie day and houre profitably and without let receaue Christ spiritually: and yet on certaine daies, & at time appointed he ought to receaue Sacramentally with a reuerent desire the body of his Redeemer, and rather seeke the honour and glorie of God, then his owne comfort. For he communicateth mystically & is inuisibly fed, as often as he deuoutly calleth to mind the mysterie of the Incarnation, and

the Passion of Christ, and is inflamed with his loue.

7. He that prepareth not himselfe, but when a feast draweth neer, and when custome compelleth him thereunto, shal often be vnprepared. Blessed is he that offereth himself vp as an Holocaust and burnt offering to our Lord, as often as he doth celebrate or communicate. Be not too long nor too short in saying Masse; but keep the accustomed manner of those with whom thou liuest. Thou oughtest not to be tedious and troublesome to others, but to obserue the common course according to the appointment of thy Superiours: and rather frame thy-selfe to the profit of others, then to thine owne deuotion or desire.

CHAP. XI.

That the Body of Christ, and the holy Scriptures, are most necessary vnto a faithful soule.

The voice of the Disciple.

O MOST sweet Lord Iesu, how great is the delight of a deuout soule that feasteth with thee in thy banquet, where there is no other meat offered to be eaten, but thy-selfe her onlie beloued, and most to be desired aboue al the desires of her hart. And verily it would be a great comfort vnto me, to powre out teares from the bottome of my hart in thy presence, and with deuout Magdalen to wash thy feet with the teares of mine eyes. But where is this deuotion? Where is so plentiful

shedding of holy teares? Surely in the sight of thee and thy holie Angels, my whole hart should be inflamed and dissolue into teares for ioy. For I enioy thee in the Sacrament really present, although hidden vnder another forme.

2. For to behold thee in thine owne diuine brightnesse, mine eyes would not be able to endure it, neither could the whole world stand in the clearnesse of the glorie of thy Maiesty. Thou therfore prouidest for my weaknesse in that thou couerest thy-selfe vnder the Sacrament. I doe really enioy and adore him, whome the Angels adore in heauen; but I, as yet for the time, in faith, they in his proper forme, and without shaddow. I ought to be content with the light of true faith, and to walke therin, vntil the day of euerlasting brightnesse breake forth, and the shaddowes of figures passe away. But when that shal come which is perfect, the vse of Sacraments shal cease.

For the Bleſſed in heauēly glorie need not the remedy of Sacraments, who reioyce without end in the preſence of God, beholding his glorie face to face, and being transformed by his brightneſſe into the brightneſſe of the incomprehenſible Deity: they taſt the Word of God made flesh, as he was from the beginning, & as he remaineth for euer.

3. Whilſt I remember theſe thy wonderful works, al ſpiritual comfort whatſoeuer becometh very tedious vnto me: for that as long as I behold not my Lord openly in his glorie, I make no account of whatſoeuer I ſee or heare in this life. Thou art my witnes, O God, that nothing can comfort me, no creature giue me reſt, but thou my God, whome I deſire to behold euerlaſtingly. But this is not poſſible whilſt I remaine in this mortal life. Therfore I muſt frame my ſelfe to much patience, and ſubmit my ſelfe to thee in al my deſires. For thy Saints alſo, O

Lord, who now reioyce with thee in the Kingdome of Heauen, whileſt they liued, expected in faith and great patience the comming of thy glorie. What they belieued, I belieue: what they hoped for, I expect: whither they are come, I truſt I shal come by thy grace. In the meane time, I wil goe forward in faith, ſtrengthned by the examples of the Saints. I haue alſo deuout books for my comfort, and for the guide of my life, and aboue al theſe, thy moſt holy Body for a ſingular remedy and refuge.

4. For I perceaue two things to be chiefly neceſſary for me in this life without which this miſerable life would be inſupportable vnto me. Whilſt I am kept in the priſon of this body, I acknowledge my ſelfe to ſtand in need of two things, to wit, food, and light. Thou haſt therfore giuen vnto me, weake creature, thy ſacred Body for the refection of my ſoule and body; and haſt ſet thy word as a light vnto my feet;

wit'rout these two I could not wel liue. For the word of God is the light of the soule, and thy Sacrament, the bread of life. These also may be called the two tables set on the one side and the other, in the store-house of the holie Church. One is the table of the holie Altar, conteyning the sacred bread, that is the precious body of Christ: the other is of the diuine law, conteyning holie doctrine, teaching true faith, and certainly leading to the part of the Temple within the veile, where are the Holy of Holies. Thanks be vnto thee Lord Iesus, light of euerlasting light, for thy table of holy doctrine, at which thou seruest vs by thy seruants, the Prophets and Apostles, and other Doctours.

5. Thanks be vnto thee, Creatour and Redeemer of man, who to manifest thy charity to the whole world, hast prepared a greater supper, wherin thou hast offered to be eaten, not the mystical

mystical lamb, but thine owne most sacred Body and Bloud, reioycing al the faithful with thy holy banquet, and replenishing them to the ful with thy heauenly Cup, in which are al the delights of heauen, and the holy Angels doe feast with vs, but with a more happy sweetnesse.

6. O how great and honourable is the office of Priests, to whome it is granted with sacred words to consecrate the Lord of Maiesty, with their lips to blesse him, with their hands to hold him, with their owne mouth to receaue him, and to administer him to others! O how cleane ought to be those hands, how pure that mouth, how holy the body, how vnspotted the hart of the Priest, in whom the Authour of purity so often entreth! Nothing but holy, no word but chast and profitable ought to proceed from the mouth of the Priest, which so often receaueth the Sacrament of Christ.

7. Simple and chaſt ought to be the eyes, that are wont to behold the body of Chriſt; the hands pure and lifted vp to heauen, that vſe to handle the Creatour of heauen & earth. Vnto the Prieſts eſpecially it is ſaid in the Law: Be ye holy, for that I your Lord God am holy.

8. Aſſiſt vs, Almighty God, with thy grace, that we, who haue vndertaken the office of Prieſthood, may ſerue thee worthily & deuoutly in al purity, and with a ſincere conſcience. And if we cannot liue in ſo great innocency as we ought to doe; grant vs notwithſtanding in due manner to bewaile the ſinnes which we haue committed, and in the ſpirit of humility, and ſincere intention to ſerue thee hereafter with more feruour.

CHAP. XII.

That he who is to communicate, ought to prepare himselfe with great diligence.

The voyce of the Beloued.

I Am the louer of purity, and the giuer of al sanctity. I seeke a pure hart, and there is the place of my rest. Make ready and adorne for me a great chamber, and I wil make with thee the Pasch with my Disciples. If thou wilt haue me come vnto thee, and remaine with thee, purge the old leauen, and make cleane the dwelling of thy hart: shut out the whole world, and al tumult of vices: sit like a sparrow solitary vpon the house top, & thinke of thy offences in the bitternesse of thy soule. For euery louer prepareth the best and faireſt

roome for his beloued, and heer inti knowne the affection of him that entertaineth his beloued.

2. Know thou notwithstanding, that the worth of no action of thine, is able to make this preparation sufficient, although thou shouldest prepare thy selfe a whole yeare togeather, and thinke on nothing else, but of my mercy and grace only. Thou art suffered to come to my table, like a beggar inuited to dinner to a rich man, who hath nothing else to returne him for his benefits, but to humble himselfe, & giue him thanks. Doe what lieth in thee, and doe it diligently; not for custom, nor for necessity, but with feare and reuerence, and harty affection receaue the body of thy beloued Lord and God who vouchsafeth to come vnto thee. I am he that haue called thee, I haue commanded it to be done, I wil supply what is wanting in thee: come and receaue me.

3. When I bestow the grace of deuotion on thee, giue thankes to God; for it is giuen thee, not for thy worthines, or deseruing in, but because I haue mercy on thee. If thou haue it not, but rather feele thy selfe dry, continue in prayer, sigh and knock, and giue not ouer vntil thou deserue to receaue some crum or drop of grace. Thou hast need of me, not I of thee, neither comest thou to sanctify me, but I come to sanctify and make thee better. Thou comest that thou maist be sanctified by me and vnited vnto me, that thou maist receaue new grace, and be stirred vp againe to amendment. Neglect not this grace but prepare thy hart with al diligence, & receaue thy beloued into thy soule.

4. But thou oughtest not only to prepare thy selfe to deuotion before Communion, but carefully also to conserue thy selfe therin, after thou hast receaued the Sacrament. Neither is the

careful guard of thy-selfe after, lesse exacted, then deuout preparation before. For a good guard afterwards is the best preparation thou canst make for the obtaining againe of greater grace, because that mans mind becometh very indisposed, if he presently power himselfe out to outward comforts. Beware of much talke, remaine in some secret place, and enioy thy God. For thou hast him whom al the world cannot take from thee. I am he, to whome thou oughtest wholy to giue thy-selfe, that so thou maist liue heerafter, not in thy selfe, but in me, without al care.

CHAP. XIII.

That a deuout ſoule ought to deſire with her whole hart to be vnited vnto Chriſt in the B. Sacrament.

The voyce of the Diſciple.

HOw may I obtaine this, ô Lord, that I may find thee alone, and open my whole hart vnto thee, & enioy thee as my ſoule deſireth? And that not man may looke vpon me nor any creature moue me or reſpect me, but thou alone maiſt ſpeake vnto me, & I to thee, as the beloued is wont to ſpeake to his beloued, and a freind to banquet with his freind. This I pray for, this I deſire, that I may be wholy vnited vnto thee, and may withdraw my hart from al created things, and more

and more, by sacred Communion and often celebrating, learne to tast of heauenly and euerlasting sweetnes. O Lord God, when shal I be wholy united and absorpt by thee and altogether forgetful of my selfe! thou in me, and I in thee! and so grant vs both to continue in one.

2. Thou art my beloued, the choicest amongst thousands, in whom my soule hath taken pleasure to dwel al the dayes of her life. Thou art my peacemaker in whome is greatest peace, and true rest, without whome is labour & sorrow, and infinit misery. Thou art a hidden God, and thy counsel is not with the wicked, but thy speach is with the humble and simple of hart. O Lord, how sweet is thy spirit, who to the end, thou mightest shew thy sweetnes towards thy children, vouchsafest to feed them with the most delightsome bread, which descendeth from heauen, and is ful of al sweetnes. Surely there is no

other Nation so great that hath Gods approaching vnto them, as thou our God art present to al thy faithful, vnto whome for their daily comfort, and for the lifting vp their harts to heauen thou giuest thy-selfe to be eaten and enioyed.

3. For what other Nation is there so famous, as the Christian people? or what creature vnder heauen so beloued as a deuout soule, to whome God himselfe commeth to feed her with his glorious flesh? O vnspeakable grace! O admirable fauour! O infinit loue, singularly bestowed vpon man! But what shal I giue vnto our Lord in returne of this grace, for so singular a charity? There is no other thing more grateful that I am able to giue, then to bestow my hart wholy on my God, and to vnite it perfectly vnto him. Then shal al my bowels reioyce, when my soule shal be perfectly vnited vnto God. The he wil say vnto me: If thou wilt be with

me, I wil be with thee. And I wil answer him: Vouchsafe, O Lord, to remaine with me, and I wil be with thee. This is my whole desire, that my hart be vnited vnto thee.

CHAP. XIIII.

Of the feruent desire of some deuout persons to receaue the Body of Christ.

The voice of the Disciple.

O How great is the store of thy sweetnesse, O Lord, which thou hast hidden for them that feare thee! When I remember some deuout persons who come vnto thy Sacrament, O Lord, with great deuotion and affection, I am oftentimes confounded, and blush within my-selfe, that I come so negligently & coldly to thy Altar, to thy table of holy

Communion: that I remaine so dry, and without spiritual motiõ or feeling, that I am not wholy inflamed in thy presẽce, my God, nor so earnestly drawne and moued, as many deuout persons haue been, who out of a vehemẽt desire of receauing, and a feeling affection of hart, could not containe themselues frõ weeping, but with the desire both of soule & body they earnestly longed after thee, O God, the liuely fountaine; being not otherwise able to tẽper nor satisfy their hunger but by receauing thy body with al ioy & spiritual greedinesse.

2. O most ardent faith of those persons, a probable argument of thy sacred presence! For they truly know their Lord in the breaking of bread, whose hart burneth so within them, whilst thou, O blessed Iesu, walkest with thẽ. Such desire and deuotion, so vehement loue and feruency is oftentimes far off from me. Be merciful vnto me, good Iesu, sweet and benigne Lord,

& grant me thy poore needy creature, to feele sometimes, at least in this holy Sacrament, a little cordial desire of thy loue; that my faith may be more strengthned, my hope in thy goodnesse increased, and that my charity once perfectly inflamed, after the tasting of heauenly Manna, may neuer decay.

3. Thy mercy, O Lord, is able to giue me the grace I desire, & to visit me in thy bounteous clemency with the spirit of feruour, when it shal please thee. For although I burn not with so great desire as those that are so especially deuoted vnto thee: yet notwithstanding by thy grace, I desire to haue this great inflamed desire, praying and crauing that I may participate with al such thy feruent louers, & be numbred among them in their holy company.

CHAP. XV.

That the grace of deuotion is obtayned by humility, and denyal of our selues.

The voyce of the Beloued.

THOV ought'eſt to ſeek the grace of deuotion inſtantly, to aske it earneſtly, to expect it patiently and confidently, to receiue it ioyfully, to keep it humbly, to worke with it diligently, and to commit the time and manner of this heauenly viſitation to God, vntil it ſhal be his pleaſure to come. Thou ought'eſt chiefly to humble thy ſelf, when thou feel'eſt inwardly little or no deuotion; and yet not to be too much dieected, nor to grieue inordinately for it. God often giueth in

a short moment that, which he hath long time denied: he giueth sometimes in the end that, which in the beginning of prayer he differred to grant.

2. If grace should be alwaies presently giuen, & at hād euer with, a wish it could not be wel indured by a weake man. Therfore deuotion is to be expected with good hope, and humble patience: yet impute it to thy-selfe, and thy sinnes, when it is not giuen thee, or when it is secretly taken from thee. It is sometimes a smal matter that hindreth & hideth grace from vs, if it be to be called smal, and not rather a great matter, that hindreth so great a good. And if thou remoue this, be it great or smal, and perfectly ouercome it, thou shalt haue thy desire.

3. For presently as soone as thou giuest thy-selfe to God, & seekest not this nor that, for thine one pleasure or wil, but setlest thy-selfe wholy in me, thou shalt find thy-selfe vnited vnto him, &

quiet. For nothing wil taſt ſo wel, and pleaſe thee ſo much, as the wil & pleaſure of God. Whoſoeuer therefore with a ſincere hart directeth his intention to God, and purgeth himſelf from al inordinate loue, or diſlike of any creature, shal be moſt fit to receaue grace, and worthy of the guift of deuotion. For our Lord beſtoweth his bleſſings there, where he findeth his veſſels empty. And how much the more perfectly one forſaketh theſe baſeſt things, and dieth to himſelfe by contempt of himſelf: ſo much the more ſpeedily grace commeth, and entreth in more plentifully, and lifteth vp the hart that is free, to a higher ſtate of grace.

4. Then shal he ſee, and abound, & wonder, & his hart shal be enlarged, becauſe the hand of our Lord is with him, & he hath put himſelfe wholy into his hand for euer. Behold ſo shal the man be bleſſed that ſeeketh Almighty God with his whole hart, and taketh

not his ſoule in vaine. This man deſerueth great grace of diuine vnion, in receauing the holy Euchariſt, for that he regardeth not his owne deuotion and comfort, but aboue al deuotion and comfort, he prizeth the honour and glory of God.

CHAP. XVI.

That we ought to manifeſt our neceſſities to Chriſt, and to craue his grace.

The voyce of the Diſciple.

O Most ſweet and louing Lord, whome I now deſire to receaue deuoutly, thou knoweſt my infirmity and the neceſſity which I endure; with how many ſinnes I am oppreſſed, how often I am grieued, tempted, troubled, and

& defiled. I come vnto thee for remedy, I craue of thee thy heauenly comfort, and the eaſe of my payne. I ſpeake to him that knoweth al things, to whom al my ſecrets are open, and who can only perfectly comfort and help me. Thou knoweſt what it is, wherof aboue al things I ſtand in moſt need, and how poore I am in vertues.

2. Behold I ſtand before thee, poore and naked, calling for grace, and craſing mercy. Refresh this thy hungry and needy creature, giue heat vnto my coldneſſe with the fire of thy loue; giue light vnto my blindnes with the brightneſſe of thy preſence. Turne al earthly things vnto me, into bitterneſſe, al things grieuous and contrary, into patience, al baſe and created things, into contempt and obliuion. Lift vp my hart to thee in heauen, and ſuffer me not to wander vpon earth: be thou only ſweet and delightſome vnto me frō hence-forth for euermore, for thou

only art my meate, and my drinke, my loue and my ioy, my delight and al my good.

3. O that with thy presence thou wouldest wholy inflame, burne, and change me into thee, that I might be made one spirit with thee by the grace of inward vnion and melting of burning loue! Suffer me not to goe from thee hungry and dry, but deale mercifully with me, as thou hast oftentimes dealt wonderfully with thy Saints. What meruaile if I should be wholy inflamed by thee, and dye in my-selfe, sith thou art fire burning and neuer decaying, loue purifying the hart, and inlightning the vnderstanding.

CHAP. XVII.

Of burning loue, and vehement desire to receaue Christ.

The voyce of the Disciple.

WIth great deuotion and burning loue, with most harty affection and feruour I desire to receaue thee, O Lord, as many Saints and deuout persons haue desired thee, when they receaued thy Sacrament, who were most pleasing vnto thee in holinesse of life, and most feruent in deuotion. O my God, my euerlasting loue, my whole good, my happinesse without end, I would gladly receaue thee with the most vehement desire, and worthy reuerence, that any of the Saints euer had, or could feele.

2. And although I be vnworthy to

haue al thoſe feelings of deuotion, yet I offer vnto thee the whole affection of my hart, as if I alone had thoſe moſt ſweet inflamed deſires: yea whatſoeuer alſo a deuout mind can conceaue and deſire, al that, with greateſt reuerence, and moſt inward affection I offer and preſent vnto thee. I wish to deſire nothing to my-ſelfe, but freely and moſt willingly to ſacrifice my-ſelfe and al mine vnto thee, my Lord God, my Creatour, and my Redeemer. I deſire to receaue thee this day with ſuch affection, reuerence, praiſe, and honour, with ſuch gratitude, worthineſſe, and loue, with ſuch faith, hope, and purity as thy moſt bleſſed Mother, the glorious Virgin Mary receaued, and deſired thee, when she humbly & deuoutly anſwerd the Angel, who declared vnto her the myſtery of thy incarnation, and ſaid: Behold the hand maid of our Lord, let it be done vnto me according to thy word.

3. And as thy bleſſed Fore-runner, the moſt excellent amongſt the Saints, Iohn Baptiſt, cheerfully leaped with ioy of the holy Ghoſt, whilſt he was yet shut vp in his mothers womb; and afterwards ſeeing Ieſus walking amōgſt mē, humbling himſelfe very much, ſaid with deuout affectiō: The freind of the Bridegrome that ſtandeth and heareth him, reioyceth with ioy for the voice of the Bridegrome: ſo I alſo wish to be inflamed with great and holy deſires, & to offer my-ſelfe vp to thee with my whole hart. Wherefore I offer alſo and preſent vnto thee the ioyes, feruent deſires, exceſſes of mind, ſpiritual illuminations, & heauenly viſions of al deuout harts, with al the vertues & praiſes exerciſed, & to be exerciſed by al creatures in heauen and earth, for my ſelfe, & al ſuch as are commended to me in prayer, that by al thou maiſt be worthily praiſed, & glorified for euer.

4. Receaue, my Lord God, the af-

fections of my hart, and desires, which I for the giue thee, infinite praise and thanks, which according to the measure of thy vnspeakable greatnesse are due vnto thee. These I yeald thee, and desire to yeald thee euery day & moment: I doe intreat, & inuite al the heauenly spirits, & al thy deuout seruants to giue thanks & praises togeather with me.

5. Let al people, Tribes, and Tongues praise thee, and magnify thy holy and sweet name with great ioy, and feruent deuotion, and let al that reuerently & deuoutly celebrate thy most high Sacrament, & receaue it with ful faith, deserue to find grace, & mercy at thy hands, and pray humbly for me sinful creature. And when they shal haue obtained their desired deuotion & ioyful vnion, and depart from thy sacred heauenly table wel comforted & meruailously refreshed, let them vouchsafe to remember my poore and needy soule.

CHAP. XVIII.

That man be not a curious ſearcher of this Sacrament, but an humble follower of Chriſt, ſubmitting his ſenſe vnto faith.

The voyce of the Beloued.

THOu oughteſt to beware of curious & vnprofitable ſearching into this moſt profound Sacrament, if thou wilt not ſink into the depth of doubt. He that is a ſearcher of Maieſty, ſhal be oppreſſed by glory. God is able to work more then man can vnderſtand. A pious and humble inquiry of truth is tolerable, ſo he be alwaies ready to be taught, and doe endeauour to walk in the ſound paths of the ancient Fathers doctrine.

2. Blessed is that simplicity, that forsaketh the difficult waies of questions, and goeth on in the plaine and assured path of God's Commandements. Many haue lost deuotion, whilst they would search after high things. Faith and sincere life are exacted at thy hands, not height of vnderstanding, nor the depth of the mysteries of God. If thou doest not vnderstand, nor conceaue those things that are vnder thee, how shalt thou be able to comprehend those that are aboue thee? Submit thy-selfe to God, & let thy sense be subiect to faith, and the light of knowledge shal be giuen thee in that degree, as shal be profitable and necessary for thee.

3. Some are grieuously tempted about faith and the Sacrament: but this is not to be imputed to thé but rather to the enemy. Doe not regard nor dispute with thy thoughts, neither doe thou giue answer to the doubts moued by the enemy, but belieue the words of God,

beleiue his Saints and Prophets, & the wicked Serpent wil fly from thee. It is oftentimes very profitable to the seruant of God to suffer such things. For he tempteth not Infidels and sinners, whom he already securely possesseth, but he sundry waies tempteth & vexeth the faithful and deuout.

4. Goe forward therefore with a sincere and vndoubted faith, and come to the Sacrament with vnfaigned reuerence, and whatsoeuer thou art not able to vnderstand, commit securely to Almighty God. God deceaueth thee not: he is deceaued that trusteth too much to himselfe. God walketh with the simple, reuealeth himselfe to the humble, giueth vnderstanding to little ones, openeth the senses of pure minds, and hideth grace from the curious and proud. Humane reason is weake, and may be deceaued, but true faith cannot be deceaued.

5. Al reason and natural search ought

to follow faith, not to goe before it; nor impugne it. For faith and loue doe chiefly excel, and worke in a hidden manner in this moſt Bleſſed and excellent Sacrament. God, who is euerlaſting, and of infinit power, doth great and inſcrutable things in heauen and in earth, and there is no ſearching of his wonderful workes. If the works of God were ſuch as might be eaſily comprehended by humane reaſon, they were not to be called wonderful, and vnſpeakable.

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